These links may expire:

**January 19**  
**Lawmakers hear state tax proposals**  
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania lawmakers should consider expanding the base of some state taxes and lowering tax rates in order to address long-standing fiscal issues, several economists told members of a House panel Thursday. That could include making more items subject to the state sales tax and... - *Altoona Mirror*

**January 17**  
**All aboard plan to spruce up SEPTA’s trolley lines**  
SEPTA’s trolleys haven’t been replaced since the 1980s when Ronald Regan was president, yet they are wildly popular with their 100,000 riders who squeeze into them every day. Thankfully, the transit agency wants to replace them with bigger cars which can handle roughly twice as many... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**January 16**  
**Legislators outline goals for new year**  
Local legislators look forward to passing bills in the new year, and saying goodbye to the budget woes of 2017. Both Rep. Dan Moul (R-91) and Sen. Rich Alloway II (R-33) were unhappy with the decision to borrow money against future revenue in order to patch the... - *Gettysburg Times*

**January 14**  
**Lowman Henry: Pa. budget follies set to resume**  
The last time a Pennsylvania governor signed a full, complete state budget into law was July 10, 2014. Gov. Tom Corbett signed off on that state fiscal plan just days after it was approved by the Legislature, completing a four-year run of on-time state budgets.... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**January 12**  
**Lawmakers react to governor’s opioid state of emergency**  
Local lawmakers said Gov. Tom Wolf’s decision to declare a state of emergency in Pennsylvania over the opioid epidemic was a good one, but some say he needs to do more. “I’m happy the governor, like the president, recognizes the epidemic as an emergency in our state, but this declaration is only a... - *Uniontown Herald-Standard*
January 7
Full of optimism, Gov. Wolf prepares for re-election
Just in time for his re-election campaign, Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf is perhaps the most optimistic person in Pennsylvania... - AP

January 5
Opioid crisis, redistricting on state lawmakers' 2018 agenda
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — There are plenty of reasons to be skeptical that the Pennsylvania Legislature will accomplish much in 2018 — it's an election year and a yawning partisan gap has divided the Republican priorities of the General Assembly and the Democratic agenda of Gov. Tom... - AP

December 31
From Boyertown to bonuses, from corruption to contraception: The 2017 issues that mattered to us
This editorial board writes more than 300 editorials a year, and we want each one to inform readers, improve our world, and make a difference. Here is a review of our opinions on some of the most important issues in the city and state for each month of 2017, and the progress (or lack thereof)... - Philadelphia Inquirer

December 27
If it's year's end, it's mea culpa time!
Forgive me, readers, for I have sinned. It’s my annual admission of fault. Sometimes in viewpoint. Sometimes in fact. I've done this for years. Because news moves at an ever-quickening pace. Because confession is good for the soul. So, let’s get to it. Back in February, I overstated an organized effort aimed at Pat Toomey.... - Philadelphia Daily News

December 22
Frats, casinos among Pennsylvania's top 2017 stories
Months before a national reckoning on sexual harassment and assault would topple powerful men in entertainment, business and media, entertainer Bill Cosby stood trial in a suburban Philadelphia courtroom, accused of drugging and molesting a woman at his home in 2004... - AP

Trib editorial: Pa.'s iffy fiscal-year projection
If Pennsylvanians believe that fairies dance on pinheads, then they should have no problem accepting the rosy forecast from the state's budget chief. In his fiscal mid-year budget briefing, Randy Albright dropped the “s” word. That's right. By the end of the fiscal year, he said, the... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

December 22
State bill calls for long-overdue limits on budget increases
For years in this space we have called on governments of all sizes to limit budgeted spending increases to no more than the rate of inflation. It’s not such an off-the-wall idea, as evidenced by the fact that 30 states have adopted some form of spending limits.... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette
Aborted plan to borrow from future liquor revenue came with a five-figure price tag
Although Gov. Tom Wolf ending up abandoning the idea of borrowing against future anticipated payments from the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board to help fund this year's state budget, it didn't come without a cost. The PLCB ended up spending $60,421.50 of public money on legal and... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**December 18**
**Right answers remain elusive in Harrisburg**
Republicans in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives have been busy working on a package of bills aimed at making changes to the annual budget-preparation process. The GOP lawmakers envision that the steps they are proposing will make inroads toward averting repeats of the consternation that has dogged... - *Altoona Mirror*

**LEGISLATIVE TALLY: Lawmakers shore up protections for bank customers, taxpayers**
(EDITOR'S NOTE: Each Monday, the Sun-Gazette summarizes major votes of the past week and, more specifically, how our locally elected and appointed officials voted on each matter. Watch for it each Monday in the Sun-Gazette.) Locally elected and appointed officials voted on the following matters in... - *Williamsport Sun-Gazette*

**December 17**
**Letter to the editor: Enough is enough, Pa.**
On Nov. 2, it was my good fortune to attend a Turkeytown veterans recognition breakfast sponsored by state Rep. Justin Walsh, R-Rostraver, that provided good chow and fellowship and featured state Rep. Rick Saccone, R-Elizabeth Township, as keynote speaker. As a veteran who... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**December 15**
**Mini casino not welcome in Buffalo Township**
Casino gambling won't be part of the landscape in Buffalo Township anytime soon. Supervisors, by a 5-0 vote, gave a thumbs-down to any of the 10 mini-casinos or satellite casinos locating in the township. Casino expansion will taking place around the state under a measure... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**December 14**
**Masser, GOP leaders praise budget reforms**
HARRISBURG — Kurt Masser (R-107) is among the state Republican leaders who praised “historic legislation” to change budget-making in Harrisburg that passed the House as the legislative session concluded. A package of six bills — House Bills 1940-1945 — requires... - *Shamokin News-Item*

**December 13**
**Legislature exits 2017 with flurry of votes, defeats**
The Pennsylvania Legislature is finished for the year after passing veto-bound abortion
restrictions, while anti-union legislation sought by top Republicans failed and legislation to tax Marcellus Shale production is in limbo... - AP

December 10
Spring tuition grant cuts could cost Pennsylvania college students $20 million in funding
Several universities say they will dig into their resources to backfill a mid-year reduction in state grant awards that help underwrite costs for more than 100,000 Pennsylvania college students. The need-based awards, known as PHEAA grants, capped out at a maximum of... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Federal, state budgets could have 'major' impact on local food banks
Around mid-morning on the first Tuesday of each month, the sizable community space at Mother of Sorrows Church in Murrysville begins filling up with food. Last week, volunteers busily stacked canned goods in one corner, while another was already filled with "Christmas breakfast bags" made and... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

December 3
Sunday pops
The annual budget and economic outlook report from Pennsylvania's Independent Fiscal Office projects state deficits for the next five years — nearly $1 billion in 2018-19, possibly $2 billion-plus by 2023 — while spending grows 3.8 percent but revenue grows just 1.7 percent... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

November 30
Gov. Wolf's toughest opponent? His own record | Opinion
The 2018 gubernatorial election season is upon us! As GOP candidates seek the nomination to take on Gov. Tom Wolf next fall, the incumbent governor's big-government allies are already filling our television screens with political ads. Matthew J. Brouillette (PennLive file)... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

November 29
Pennsylvania towns face deadline on gambling expansion
Pennsylvania's more than 2,500 municipalities have about a month left to decide whether they want to be at the table for the state's latest expansion of gambling. The measure to fund state government this year, signed into law by Gov. Tom Wolf on Oct. 30, included allowing 10 new satellite casinos across the... - Reading Eagle

Lawmakers won’t zero selves out
Some Republican state senators have identified the problem and it is not them. They plan to introduce legislation to establish “zero-based” budgeting. Each state agency would begin each budget year at zero rather than using the previous year's appropriation as a starting point.
The... - Scranton Times
**Fireworks seller questions safety of new fireworks law**
Pennsylvania residents are now allowed to buy consumer grade fireworks in their home state. Under the new state budget is a change in the rules for selling fireworks in Pennsylvania, as well as a hefty tax increase on them. State Sen. Elder Vogel co-sponsored the change. He said the former... - *New Castle News*

**State senator Randy Vulakovich seeks re-election amid challengers**
Republican Randy Vulakovich, who ran unopposed in the 38th state Senate District just three years ago, announced his re-election bid Tuesday night -- facing somewhat more daunting opposition this time around. “I am asking the voters of this district to take the measure of my... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**November 28**
**Check out what is and isn’t taxed in Pa.**
Pennsylvania sales taxes account for more than $9 billion annually in revenue for the state. The latest round of budget negotiations included legalizing fireworks in Pennsylvania and taxing those sales at 12 percent on top of the state's 6 percent sales tax. More: No York County tax increase for 2018... - *York Daily*

**Our view: State officials being rewarded for poor work**
It’s not just the lackluster or more recently unacceptable performance of too many of our elected officials in Harrisburg. It’s not just the serial scandals that have forced some to resign and landed others in jail. It’s also the naked self-interest that are often at the heart of all of... - *Erie Times-News*

**November 27**
**GOP must offer solutions and a path forward - not just shout and be angry**
Pennsylvanians and all Americans are frustrated at the self-serving talk from politicians from both parties who are more focused on being something than doing something. Republicans driven by pro-growth principles win elections, because they present a vision for our state and country that the majority of... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**State budget malpractice**
It was fitting in its way last week when a federal judge stalled the state government’s effort to help fund the budget with $200 million from a fund for medical malpractice coverage. The budget itself, after all, is the result of legislative malpractice. U.S. District Judge Christopher Conner of Harrisburg granted a request... - *Scranton Times*

**November 26**
**Keystone Viewpoints: Change state budget cycle**
Pennsylvania’s Constitution requires passage of a balanced budget by July 1 each year, the beginning of the fiscal year. State lawmakers, however, have come to treat that as a suggestion rather than a constitutional mandate. There were seven consecutive budget impasses... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*
State should tap shadow budget
Editor: It was encouraging to see how upset the editorial board is over the legislature’s $95 million surplus. The board should be even more upset about the $10 billion held in off-book accounts by state agencies. Only around 40 percent of the state’s budget is covered by the General... - Wilkes-Barre Citizens’ Voice

November 20
Change state budget cycle
Pennsylvania’s constitution requires passage of a balanced budget by July 1 each year, the beginning of the fiscal year. State lawmakers, however, have come to treat that as a suggestion rather than a constitutional mandate. There were seven consecutive budget impasses... - Scranton Times

Editorial | Johnstown shouldn’t ante up for a casino license
“You got to know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em, “Know when to walk away, know when to run.” – “The Gambler.” The idea of mini-casinos scattered across Pennsylvania is a harebrained plan hatched by the state Gaming Control Board to separate industrious... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

November 19
Legislature sits on surplus
It didn’t take long for the state’s Independent Fiscal Office to illustrate the dishonesty of the recently completed state government budget, which doesn’t come close to achieving the balance required by the constitution. Four months late, fueled by exasperation more so than compromise, the... - Scranton Times

Experts: Betting on Pennsylvania gaming expansion risky
While Westmoreland County officials hope to cash in as Pennsylvania adds up to 10 mini casinos, some industry observers doubt the plan to expand gambling will generate the tax revenue state lawmakers are betting on to balance the budget. “These satellite casinos will likely cannibalize business from the... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Troubled Cheyney averts a crisis, keeps accreditation
Cheyney University, the nation’s oldest historically black college and a school nearly at the brink of collapse, got a key reprieve Friday when a regional education panel allowed the university to keep its accreditation while it struggles to right its course.... - Philadelphia Inquirer

November 17
State Rep. Tina Pickett addresses the Towanda Senior Citizens Club
WYSOX TOWNSHIP — During an appearance on Thursday before the Towanda Senior Citizens Club, state Rep. Tina Pickett (R-110) spoke about the recent passage of a Constitutional amendment that could lead to the elimination of some property taxes, the difficulty in getting legislation... - Towanda Daily Review
November 16

Local officials must weigh gambling expansion
Franklin County municipalities have until the end of the year to decide whether or not they would be willing to allow gambling in their communities. Last month, Gov. Tom Wolf signed a gambling expansion law creating a Category 4 “mini casino” license, which would allow between 300 and... - Waynesboro Record Herald

It’s simple: You can’t trust our state lawmakers
There’s plenty not to like about the Pennsylvania Legislature. This is the gang that regularly fails to complete on time its one constitutionally mandated duty: to pass a state budget by June 30. This year, lawmakers celebrated like they had won the lottery when they passed a budget on time.... - Washington Observer-Reporter

Cheswick says ‘no’ to mini-casino idea
It doesn’t look like one of the state’s new mini-casinos will be opening up in Cheswick anytime soon. Council is scheduled to act on a resolution, perhaps as soon as Dec. 13, to opt out of any consideration for one of the 10 proposed mini-casinos, licenses for which go on sale next year.... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

PA. Gambling expansion is a losing bet.
A bill that should be on the governor’s desk for a signature but isn’t: changing the state’s official slogan to “Welcome to Pennsylvania: It’s Las Vegas with hunting.” After months of dithering, Pennsylvania lawmakers finally resolved the state budget impasse recently by approving, among other things, a major... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Audit: Pa. Legislature sitting on $95M surplus
HARRISBURG >> An audit of the finances of Pennsylvania’s Legislature has found that the House, Senate and internal departments had a $95 million funding surplus at the end of the most recent fiscal year... - AP

Scavello said he helped Mount Airy casino
State Sen. Mario Scavello admitted Wednesday he had Senate leaders working on a bill to expand gambling include language that protects Mount Airy Casino Resort from potential nearby competition. “I’m doing it for the jobs,” Scavello said in an interview with... - Scranton Times

November 15

State authority approves borrowing against Pennsylvania tobacco settlement funds
Pennsylvania’s Commonwealth Financing Authority put its stamp of approval Tuesday on a big and controversial patch to the state’s deficit-ridden $32.0 billion budget. The authority voted unanimously to approve borrowing up to $1.5 billion against future revenues from the 1998 multi-state settlement with the... - Penn Live, Patriot-News
State budget transfers wouldn’t hurt transportation
A recent Post-Gazette article ( “Wolf Won’t Transfer Money From Transit Trust,” Nov. 9) details Gov. Tom Wolf’s announcement concerning fund transfers from the commonwealth’s special accounts. The piece accepts the administration’s faulty narrative that the transfers... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Government in shadows
State lawmakers who normally run over one another while racing to the microphones ran just as fast in the opposite direction this week, when asked who was responsible for a particularly grungy special-interest amendment favoring the Mount Airy Casino Resort in Monroe County.... - Scranton Times

November 14
Sleight of hand: Who slipped in law to protect Mount Airy Casino?
As state lawmakers put the finishing touches on a months-overdue revenue package, one or more of them found time for a little mischief to benefit a favorite casino. It is this kind of underhanded move that perpetuates Harrisburg’s reputation as a fetid swamp.... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Hughesville passes 2018 budget
HUGHESVILLE — Borough council on Monday agreed to advertise the borough's 2018 balanced budget of $969,278, which reflects no change in the 5-mill tax rate. The total is a slight increase over the 2017 budget of $961,708. At the meeting, borough Secretary Gail Kocher told council that the cost of... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Pennsylvania’s budget package is hit by $200 million lawsuit
HARRISBURG — A state-created medical malpractice insurer of last resort is asking a federal judge to block the Pennsylvania government’s demand for $200 million from its reserves and a threat to shut it down if it does not hand over the cash.... - AP

November 13
Can sinners save Pennsylvania? Lawmakers gambling on it
The solution to your problems is never alcohol, they say — and probably not smoking or gambling, either. Unless, that is, you’re the Pennsylvania legislature. The passage of the state’s most major gambling expansion since casinos came to town marked the third time in less than two years that lawmakers... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Answer to deficit is severance tax
To the Editor: Six years ago, state Rep. Greg Vitali, D-166, Havertown, made the first attempt to impose a severance tax on oil and gas companies extracting natural gas from Pennsylvania’s bedrock. Since then, 66 attempts by Pennsylvania lawmakers to impose a fee or... - Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald
State’s ‘normal’ isn’t -
Let’s cut to the chase: the process that led to a completed state budget is not normal. And good government in this state is impossible if it becomes normal. The budget is technically in balance. But despite including about $1.5 billion in efficiencies identified by Gov. Tom Wolf, it raises so little... - Scranton Times

LOWMAN S. HENRY: Pennsylvania’s wacky budget season finally ends
It was perhaps the strangest budget season in Penn’s Woods since King Charles, II granted William Penn a charter to establish a colony in the New World. The end came relatively quietly with the General Assembly passing a variety of gimmicks aimed at plugging a $2.2 billion budget hole of their... - West Chester Daily Local News

November 12
Tucked in Pa. gaming bill: A million-dollar clause for Mount Airy Casino
In a last-minute maneuver before the state Senate last month passed a sweeping expansion of casino gambling in Pennsylvania, lawmakers added a 28-word amendment, cloaked in legalese. “A category 4 slot machine license may not be located in a sixth-class county which is contiguous to a county that hosts a category 2 licensed... - Philadelphia Inquirer

November 10
Pa.’s budget season ended with a whimper, not a bang | Editorial
With the advantage of distance, it’s tough not to reach the conclusion that the debate over this year’s state budget didn’t so much reach a fruitful conclusion as it did sputter to a halt, the air going out of it like an overinflated balloon. Yes, Republicans who control the General Assembly and the Democratic Wolf... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Wolf won’t transfer money from transit trust
Gov. Tom Wolf won’t say what funds he will tap to fill a $300 million gap in the state budget, but his office said Thursday he won’t touch transportation funds. That’s good news for Port Authority, which had said it could face service cuts from 50 percent to 5 percent depending on how much money was... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Colin McNickle: Can growth cover Pa. budget fixes?
While there are signs that Pennsylvania’s overall economy might be improving, the critical question is whether it’s growing fast enough to cover some less-than-optimum actions taken by state government to close a series of budget shortfalls, say Allegheny Institute for Public Policy... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

November 9
Budget fudge: The state limps to a fiscal solution, for now
Budget fudge: The state limps to a fiscal solution, for now The state finally has a balanced budget, but it’s nothing to write home about. It takes some important steps, such as preserving funding for state-related universities, while leaving some work, such as a needed... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Conventional center leaders open to idea of casino
A forthcoming advertisement seeking proposals for development of a hotel and/or restaurant on the grounds of the Blair County Convention Center won’t mention the word “casino.” But if someone wants to develop a hotel with a casino, the authority that manages the convention center is interested.... - Altoona Mirror

Expansion of gambling and casinos in Pa. may not be a boon
Pennsylvania’s sweeping gaming-expansion legislation, which creates 10 mini-casinos and allows betting online, in airports, and at truck stops, could hurt revenues at the state’s current casinos and cannibalize their business, the credit-rating agency Moody’s Investors Service... - Philadelphia Inquirer

AVP gaming shouldn’t fly
Gambling is a perfect source of state revenue, for politicians. They impose massive taxes — 54 percent on slot machines and 16 percent on table games and poker — through a third party so that they aren’t held accountable at the polls. They don’t tax gamblers, you see, they tax casinos. So imagine how... - Hazleton Standard-Speaker

Pennsylvania to publicize list of towns saying no to a mini-casino
In its first meeting since Gov. Tom Wolf signed a huge gambling expansion law, the agency that regulates Pennsylvania’s gambling industry announced Wednesday it soon will list which municipalities do not want to host one of the the state’s new wagering options — a mini-casino.... - Allentown Morning Call

November 8
Michael Stershic: Pa. Legislature ignores economic benefits of promoting tourism
Another year, another budget crisis in Pennsylvania. It seems like every year, our elected officials struggle to balance the state budget. They bemoan the state of the economy, blame a variety of causes for the bleak fiscal outlook, threaten cuts to vital programs and.... - Allentown Morning Call

November 7
Democrats selling out Pa. for fossil-fuel bucks | Letter
The administration of Gov. Tom Wolf is willing to put your children’s and future generations’ health, safety, and natural resources on the table in a desperate attempt to bring revenue into the state. Last week the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center held vigils for money at Republican... - Easton Express-Times

Rueben Brock seeks 18th Congressional District seat
Arguing he will represent people rather than political elites, Washington native and psychologist Rueben Brock has joined the crowded field seeking the seat in the 18th Congressional District that was vacated by Republican Tim Murphy last month. www.observer-reporter.com/news/election/solomon-holding-campaign-event/article_2fad2c7e-c321-11e7-8922-37d6354809ab.html... - Washington Observer-Reporter
Lowman Henry: Pa. has budget, but problems remain
It was perhaps the strangest budget season in Penn’s Wood since King Charles II granted William Penn a charter to establish a colony in the New World. The end came relatively quietly, with the General Assembly passing a variety of gimmicks aimed at plugging a $2.2 billion budget hole of its own... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

November 6
**No Time Frame For New Gambling**
The spokesman for the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board says it’s too soon to say how quickly the new forms of gambling authorized by a bill signed into law by Governor Wolf last Monday will be ready for action. There are some time frames for steps in the process specified in the new... - *KYW News Radio 1060*

Darts & Laurels: Lame effort on funding from Pa. Legislature
A look at the week that was, the issues and people who made headlines, and a few darts and laurels for those who deserve them. DART: To the Pennsylvania Legislature. This is the best you could come up with? A boatload of new gambling and borrowing a billion bucks from the... - *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*

**State Sen. Bob Mensch’s law could change state budgets**
Pennsylvania’s budgeting process is vexing to say the least, but a new law could bring a bit more logic to spending in state government. Last week, Gov. Tom Wolf signed a measure to implement "performance-based budgeting." State Sen. Bob Mensch, a Montgomery County Republican,... - *Reading Eagle*

Ron Southwick: Gambling expansion shouldn’t have been rushed
To dig out of a financial mess, Pennsylvania is going to expand gambling even more. Gov. Tom Wolf signed legislation to add more gambling options in the Keystone State. Both casinos and the Pennsylvania Lottery will add online games as they hunt for younger players.... - *Reading Eagle*

November 5
**Wolf to let education-funding bill lapse into law**
Gov. Wolf on Friday announced he will allow an education-funding bill to become law, though it contains a provision stripping seniority protection from teachers in layoffs that has angered an important part of his electoral coalition. The bill, known as the education code, authorizes spending for public... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

Funding budget via gambling is reckless
Just to make sure I have read the news correctly: The Republican-controlled state House and Senate is willing to fund the state budget through gambling rather than by placing a tax on the extraction of natural gas from Pennsylvania lands. So our legislators believe their supporters, many of whom are dedicated... - *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*
Pa. gambling expansion comes too late
The gambling expansion bill was signed into law by Gov. Wolf. It is four months late. This inexcusable delay, caused by the Republican legislators’ inability to — I am just going to say it — work resulted in a reduction in our credit worthiness. While not working, they refused to consider taxing the... - Allentown Morning Call

Why does Penn State get budget money?
I am curious why our ineffective state Legislature, which is struggling to fund a budget, feels compelled to provide state funds to Penn State — a university that has billions in endowment funds; is paying its head football coach $5.8 million; and has paid millions in settlements to the... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

November 3
Our view: Pennsylvanians deserve better budgeting
The Erie region won big in the recently completed 2017-18 state budget. The Erie School District’s finances are stabilized thanks to $14 million in additional recurring funding. The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, which had been threatened by a Supreme Court ruling, survived... - Erie Times-News

New law will bring performance-based budgeting to the commonwealth
A new law that will go in effect in two months is expected to bring more accountability to the state’s budgeting process. Thank you for Reading! Please log in, or sign up for a new account and purchase a subscription to continue reading. On Monday, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf signed into law SB181,... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

Big win for a 2nd Philly casino: SugarHouse drops its objections
It’s a go. After a three-year legal wrangle, SugarHouse Casino has dropped its effort to block a second Philadelphia gaming license, paving the way for Stadium Casino LLC to build its Live! hotel and casino in South Philadelphia. SugarHouse dropped its appeal of the licensing decision after Gov. Wolf... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Legislators address TriCounty Area Chamber on state budget, economic climate
Pottstown >> Members of the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce had an opportunity Thursday to hear from several area lawmakers during the chamber’s annual legislative breakfast. The breakfast gives chamber members a chance to hear about issues facing the region, and to ask questions.... - Pottstown Mercury

November 2
Editorial: It’s Groundhog Day, Harrisburg-style
Trick-or-Treat came early in Harrisburg. The treat? Well, if you like gambling, you’re going to love the funding mechanism that our elected leaders finally came up with to pay for that $32 billion spending plan they approved last summer. And to think it only took them four months to come up with it.... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times
Pa. shows it values state-related universities and their impact
In light of the recent completion of the state budget, I write to thank those legislators who overwhelmingly supported funding for our state-related universities, and specifically here in southwestern Pennsylvania, the University of Pittsburgh ("Gov. Wolf Signs Bill to... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Our view: County, city must cooperate
The state gaming expansion legislation, however unsavory as a way to balance the state's books, played out excellently for Erie County. The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority appeared poised for elimination early in the state's budgeting process. Some lawmakers disapproved of... - Erie Times-News

Trib Thursday wrap editorial: Fiscal clarity?
Bemoaning "special-interest politicians, self-interest, political games trumping the public interest" at the monthly press club meeting Monday in Harrisburg, Gov. Tom Wolf wasn't quite as reassuring about the state borrowing $1.5 billion, as approved by the Legislature. Although Wolf... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

November 1
Pennsylvania's 2-day-old gambling law already nets $1 million
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) -- Cash is already rolling into Pennsylvania's coffers as a result of a sprawling, two-day-old gambling expansion law... - AP

Missing the big votes: Report points to absences in the Pa. House during budget week
If it seemed like there were a lot of missing lawmakers during the closure of the protracted state budget process last week, there were. In the state House of Representatives anyway. Nineteen of the 202 currently-seated state House members were on leave for last Thursday's vote to expand gambling throughout Pennsylvania. Eleven... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Where's gambling support?
I've read Gov Wolf wants to expand gambling to help balance the state budget. We have 12 casinos in Pennsylvania but are authorized 14, we can have more tha 60,000 slot machines but only have 24,000. So how does that work? They don't appear to be profitable enough to... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

October 31
Penn National official says gambling bill will have punitive impact on business
For Wyomissing-based Penn National Gaming Inc., Gov. Tom Wolf signing legislation for a major expansion of gambling in Pennsylvania came as a bitter jolt. "It's disappointing that the governor has signed on to this ill-conceived, massive gaming expansion plan that will have a uniquely punitive impact on... - Reading Eagle
**Wolf signs bills to balance Pa. budget with gambling and borrowing, hints of veto of education bill**

HARRISBURG — Gov. Wolf signed Monday most of the bills needed to bring the state’s $32 billion budget into balance, authorizing an expansion of casino gambling and a borrowing plan pushed by lawmakers. And he took one more chance to complain about the politics of the... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**MontCo lawmaker wants one vote on spending, revenue plan | Tuesday Morning Coffee**

Good Tuesday Morning, Fellow Seekers. Some things just make sense: Peanut butter and jelly; Oreos and a tall glass of milk; a good, but not too expensive, chianti with red sauce pasta; and a state spending plan that's only approved when you know how much money... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**Gas tax can spark reform**

Even though the state budget is nearly four months late, it is not nearly as overdue as a fair tax on natural gas extraction — the standard in every gas-producing state except Pennsylvania. The focus of all four legislative caucuses and the Wolf administration,... - *Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice*

**Trib editorial: Gambling on Pennsylvania’s future**

It came at night without public review or input. Then about 470 pages of gambling legislation sailed through Pennsylvania’s legislative chambers in just 18 hours, ultimately to be signed into law on Monday by Gov. Tom Wolf. Lawmakers anxious to exit the capital for the upcoming elections... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**Gambling expansion does not solve state budget structure problems**

Pennsylvania casinos will gross more revenue this year than any state except Nevada. So it comes as no surprise that the state lawmakers and Gov. Wolf, with a new budget stalled by a $2.2 billion deficit, last week approved a bill to expand casino-style campling to truck stops, online portals and airports... - *Williamsport Sun-Gazette*

**Pathetic budget**

If a trick-or-treater shows up at your door tonight masquerading as a casino croupier, there’s a good chance that House Republican leaders or Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf is behind that false face. After stonewalling badly needed reforms to the state’s tax structure,... - *Scranton Times*

**Editorial: In Pa., when all else fails, roll the dice**

Gus the Groundhog would be so proud. When all else fails, keep on scratching. And gambling. Slide over Gus, you’re about to get some new competition in the Keystone State. With a four-month stalemate seemingly going nowhere, Pennsylvania legislators fell back on an old crutch. They’re going to roll the dice... - *West Chester Daily Local News*

**Highlights of Pennsylvania’s casino gambling expansion law**

Gov. Tom Wolf has signed a measure to expand casino-style gambling in Pennsylvania —
already the nation's No. 2 commercial casino state — after lawmakers approved it last week in a bid to help the state government plug its biggest cash shortfall since the recession... - AP

October 30
PA Budget Standoffs: ‘July 1st Needs To Mean Something Again’
HARRISBURG (CBS) — The latest marathon state budget standoff may be drawing to a close. If Governor Wolf signs revenue and other budget companion bills that are now finally on his desk, the latest logjam will be over after nearly four months. Republican Jake Corman, the Senate majority leader, says one reason it... - KYW News Radio 1060

Wolf Faces Decision On Revenue, Gaming Bills
HARRISBURG, Pa. (CBS) — Governor Wolf has the rest of this week to take action on bills sent to him last week that would address this year’s deficit – nearly four months after the state budget was passed. One bill authorizes a sweeping expansion of gambling in Pennsylvania,... - KYW News Radio 1060

As Wolf signs off on remaining budget legislation, education bill gives him pause
Gov. Tom Wolf on Monday signed most of the remaining legislation needed to balance Pennsylvania's $32 billion budget, except for one piece that outlines the details of education funding. The Democratic governor left open the possibility that he could veto that... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Gambling is a bad bet to fix Pennsylvania's budget
THE ISSUE Lawmakers in Pennsylvania, which is second only to Nevada in commercial casino revenues, voted Thursday to approve the biggest expansion of gambling in the state since casinos were legalized more than a decade ago, The Associated Press reported. The Republican-controlled House approved and... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

Gov. Wolf signs bills to borrow money, expand gambling to fund budget
Gov. Tom Wolf on Monday affixed what he hopes will be a final patch on a $2.3 billion budget deficit. The governor made the announcement during an appearance at the monthly Pennsylvania Press Club luncheon in Harrisburg. The good news is that by accepting the plan passed by the state legislature... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Their view: Legislature should look to compromise not gaming revenue
Place your bets and pull the lever, spin the wheel, pick your numbers or deal the cards. Your choice of gambling venues has become irrelevant. The safest bet in Pennsylvania is not in the casinos, lottery cards, pony tracks or any other odds-making opportunity. If you want the lock of locks, bet on this every... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf signs bill allowing online gambling, more casinos
Gov. Tom Wolf on Monday signed legislation authorizing a major expansion of gambling in what's already the nation's second-largest commercial casino state, as Pennsylvania government leaders searched for money to plug holes in the state's tattered finances... - AP
Tom Wolf and that bad, bad 'Stranger Things' budget in Harrisburg
Now that our Looney Tunes legislature passed a state budget — long overdue and way underdone — what sort of political fallout do you think ensues? It’s four months late and fiscally reckless, yet another short-term fix for a state with long-term problems. And Gov. Wolf, yet again, faces a... - Philadelphia Inquirer

October 29
One trick pony
Pennsylvania’s Legislature has proved yet again that betting against it doing the right thing always is the lock of the day. Both houses have passed an unconscionable, exponentially vast gambling expansion bill to help fund the state budget, instead of reforming public... - Scranton Times

PennDOT: Thousands of miles of state roadway paved this year
So far this year, roughly 2,100 roadway miles were paved and PennDOT has put out contracts to preserve, repair, and replace more than 450 state-owned bridges and 18 locally owned bridges, plus completed 20 bridge projects with department forces. The announcement was made in conjunction with an event that PennDOT... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

Editorial: A budget this late should be a lot better
Editorial: A budget this late should be a lot better - Reading Eagle

Gov. Wolf gives go-ahead to Pa. Lottery to offer virtual sports to retailers
Pennsylvania bars and taverns can soon offer a new pastime: virtual sports games... - AP

Budget bills are ugly but Wolf has little choice but to sign
Pennsylvania’s House of Representatives had passed an aggressive, bipartisan gambling expansion bill an hour earlier when Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf’s top budget adviser walked by the chamber’s Democratic leader in the Capitol's ornate Rotunda... - AP

Here’s how lawmakers from Lancaster County voted on expanding gambling in Pennsylvania
Lancaster County’s state House delegation voted 10-1 against a massive expansion of gambling approved Thursday. The lone local vote for the bill, which Gov. Tom Wolf is now reviewing after it passed the House 109-72, came from Rep. Bryan Cutler, a Peach Bottom Republican who serves as House GOP whip.... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

Wolf should send 'all-in' budget back to gamblers in the Legislature | Editorial
"All in." That’s the only way to describe the revenue bill approved last week by the Pennsylvania Legislature to plug a $2.2 billion deficit, leaving only the corner craps game unregulated and untaxed. No exaggeration. It’s easier to list the forms of gambling left out of the... - Easton Express-Times
**Pa. casino industry hits jackpot**
Pennsylvania’s Legislature has proved yet again that betting against it doing the right thing always is the lock of the day. Both houses have passed an unconscionable, exponentially vast gambling expansion bill to help fund the state budget, instead of reforming public... - *Wilkes-Barre Citizens’ Voice*

**October 27**
**Lazy Pa. legislators ready to bet, borrow, and spend**
Video slot machines at truck stops, mini-casinos, a firecracker tax, and piles of new debt: That’s all to be found in the thought bubbles of the cartoon characters in the Pennsylvania legislature who have failed to come up with a fiscally responsible plan to close a $2 billion deficit and... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**Editorial: When all else fails, roll the dice in Pa. budget mess**
Gus the Groundhog would be so proud. When all else fails, keep on scratching. And gambling. Slide over Gus, you’re about to get some new competition in the Keystone State. With a four-month stalemate seemingly going nowhere, Pennsylvania legislators are falling back on an old crutch. They’re going to roll... - *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*

**Pa. is completely unprepared for the next recession**
It may not always have felt like it, but the United States is in the midst of the second-longest period of economic expansion in modern history. More than eight years have passed since the end of the Great Recession, and most U.S. business owners and policymakers have finally been granted enough... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**Berks County lawmakers explain votes on state gambling expansion**
How they voted on more gambling State representatives Yes - Thomas R. Caltagirone, Democrat Yes - Barry Jozwiak, Republican No - Jim Cox, Township Republican No - Gary Day, Republican No - Mark M. Gillen, Republican No - Jerry Knowles, Republican No - Ryan E. Mackenzie, Republican... - *Reading Eagle*

**New Pa. budget features special Delco provision**
Gov. Tom Wolf has 10 days to sign off on a budget bill that landed on his desk Thursday in Harrisburg, four months after the fiscal year 2017-18 began. The budget that passed the Legislature this week includes a major expansion to online gambling, applies sales tax to online goods and will borrow $1.5... - *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*

**Q&A: DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell discusses Pennsylvania’s environmental future**
Long before Patrick McDonnell took the helm of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, he roamed the Lehigh Valley as a political science student at DeSales and Lehigh universities. McDonnell now has more than 15 years with the DEP and is in his first as... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**October 26**
Pennsylvania House joins Senate in expanding gambling
The Pennsylvania House voted 109-72 this morning to approve a broad expansion of the state’s gambling options. Senate passage came last night. If Gov. Tom Wolf signs HB271 into law, some truck stops could have video slot machines, mini casinos could pop up around the state, and you’ll be able to buy a Pennsylvania... - Allentown Morning Call

Hollywood Casino could be hurt by ‘satellite’ casinos, Internet gambling means new money: reaction to House bill
Lawmakers are rolling the dice and hoping a bill on Gov. Tom Wolf’s desk will help patch the $2.3 billion state budget deficit. But some are wondering, if Wolf signs the bill, allowing for 10 smaller casinos and legalizing Internet gambling in Pennsylvania, will it be the... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Far-reaching gambling bill passes Pennsylvania House
The biggest gambling expansion in Pennsylvania since it first authorized casinos more than a decade ago cleared the last hurdle Thursday to get to Gov. Tom Wolf’s desk, where it awaited an uncertain fate... - AP

How they’re breaking budget impasse in Harrisburg
HARRISBURG — More borrowing, more casinos, and a few more taxes. That is the solution the Republican-controlled legislature has devised to balance Pennsylvania’s budget and break a stubborn stalemate that has hurt the state’s financial standing and tested political alliances.... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Pennsylvanians, a balanced budget is finally close at hand
It’s nearly four full months overdue but the General Assembly finally appears to be close to bringing closure to the 2017-18 state budget saga. In a flurry of activity over the past few days, the House and Senate moved a series of bills to Gov. Tom Wolf to provide a deficit patch in the $32... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Highlights of Pennsylvania’s casino gambling expansion bill
A newly unveiled measure to expand casino-style gambling in Pennsylvania - already the nation’s No. 2 commercial casino state - is headed to the desk of Gov. Tom Wolf after lawmakers approved it in a bid to help the state government plug its biggest cash shortfall since the recession... - AP

Pennsylvania Senate sends the big budget patch to Gov. Wolf’s desk
Acting with no debate, the Pennsylvania Senate has just checked another major box toward completion of the unbalanced state budget. The chamber voted 29-21 Wednesday afternoon to pass a $1.6 billion revenue bill that consists almost entirely of a $1.5 billion borrowing against... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Keystone stakes: State universities, already pricey, can’t be cut loose
Keystone stakes: State universities, already pricey, can’t be cut loose Pennsylvania’s public
universities remain among the priciest in the nation, according to a new report by the College Board, and that embarrassing situation is bound to worsen if the Legislature defunds the... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Mike Turzai to Penn State, Pitt: We gave you $400 million, now freeze your tuition**
Now that $600 million is headed their way, Pennsylvania House Speaker Mike Turzai is urging officials at Penn State, University of Pittsburgh and other state-related colleges to freeze tuition prices next year. Turzai, R-Marshall Township, called on university leaders to pledge not to... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**Massive gambling expansion passes state House of Representatives**
The state House of Representatives Thursday sent a major gambling expansion bill to Gov. Tom Wolf. After a rare breakfast hour debate, the House voted 109-72 to pass a bill that would make Pennsylvania the fourth state in the nation to legalize Internet-based games, authorizes a second-string of 10 smaller casinos... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**Gaming bill would allow for expansion in Erie**
State Senate passes key legislation and waits on House as budget stalemate continues. Pennsylvania lawmakers worked to break the state’s 117-day budget deadlock on Wednesday night as the Senate passed a bill to expand casino-style gambling to raise as much as $200 million — legislation... - *Erie Times-News*

**With budget near the goal line, Gov. Wolf presses for tax on gas drillers**
With the debate on the 2017-18 state budget almost over the goal line, Gov. Tom Wolf is still pressing the case for a severance tax for natural gas drillers - a 2014 campaign promise and a goal that’s eluded Democrats for nearly a decade. In a statement released amid a flurry of votes on Wednesday, Wolf’s... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**Massive borrowing, gambling bills advance in state budget scramble**
The last cinderblocks in a four-month stalemate over how to fix Pennsylvania's deficit-riddled finances began falling Wednesday as Pennsylvania lawmakers worked into the night to advance massive borrowing and casino gambling measures... - *AP*

**Pa. House adjourns for night without a final vote on gambling expansion bill**
That long-awaited state budget patch isn't quite finished yet. The state House of Representatives adjourned Wednesday in mid-debate on a gambling expansion bill that authorize up to 10 new satellite casinos, legalizes Internet-based games and permits slots-style video games at truck... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**'It can be a hassle:' Drivers divided on Pa. plan to allow gambling at truck stops**
A bill headed to Gov. Tom Wolf to allow video gambling in Pennsylvania's truck stops drew decidedly mixed reviews Thursday from the people it would affect the most. Hours after the House of Representatives passed the measure on to the governor, truck drivers coming and going at the Flying J in Middlesex... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*
Legislature finally passes budget legislation that relies on borrowing and gambling
Three months, three weeks and five days past deadline, the last of the bills to balance the state budget is finally headed to the governor. Whether Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf will approve the budget bills — ending a stubborn impasse that has consumed the Capitol — remains to be seen. - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

October 25
In Pa. Capitol, budget deal in the works
Nearly four months past the deadline, Pennsylvania could be close to getting a balanced budget. The Republican-controlled legislature was preparing to work late into the night Wednesday to move key pieces of a long-overdue revenue package to fund the state’s $32 billion spending plan and close a more than $2 billion gap. - Philadelphia Inquirer

Report: Absent since July, Scranton-area lawmaker is a Capitol no-show | Wednesday Morning Coffee

State Legislature OKs recurring funding for Erie schools
House votes Tuesday to make $14 million in additional aid permanent for Erie School District. Senate voted in favor of the measure on Monday. The Erie School District’s long fight for additional state funding has ended with a stunning political win in Harrisburg that will shape the... - Erie Times-News

Pennsylvania lawmakers eye borrowing, gambling bills in budget scramble
Lawmakers are scrambling to advance massive borrowing and casino gambling measures to help resolve a nearly four-month stalemate over how to fix Pennsylvania’s deficit-riddled finances... - AP

State lawmakers optimistic a budget deal is within reach
State legislators are homing in this week on a revenue package that favors borrowing and transferring funds over imposing new taxes to close a $2.2 billion budget gap and end a four-month stalemate. Disagreement persisted Tuesday between the House and Senate over proposals... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Pennsylvania gambling expansion takes center stage in state budget debate again: A midday check
The ball is in the state Senate’s court on this issue at the moment, and the truth is that the final dimensions of the package - if one emerges at all - will only become evident after this afternoon’s caucuses. But here’s a look at the major provisions that are on the table.... - Penn Live, Patriot-News
October 24

TSG, students continue lobbying for state funding
Temple Student Government hosted a phone bank event on Main Campus last week to encourage students to call their state representatives and ask them to vote in favor of the new state budget. More than 415 students called their representatives to ask that they... - Temple Times

A severance tax that’s not worth the price | Opinion
As a longtime supporter of the severance tax I find myself in the unusual position of now opposing it. Although it would provide much-needed revenue for this year’s commonwealth budget, it is clear that Senate Republicans will not allow even a modest severance tax without exacting provisions that... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Optimism starting to build - again - around Pa. Capitol about solving state budget stalemate
Optimism is starting to build again around the idea that Pennsylvania’s state government could have a completed budget. And soon. The Senate started moving related bills Monday, and the state House announced it would return to voting session on Tuesday. "It’s one of those things where if everything’s moving together, we could... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Injunction sought to stop Wolf’s borrowing to balance Pa.’s budget
Gov. Tom Wolf’s plan to use his executive powers to borrow against future Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board payments to help fund this year’s budget may have hit a roadblock. An emergency injunction was filed in Commonwealth Court on Monday seeking to put on hold the PLCB’s plan to carry out Wolf’s request to monetize the... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

State Senate ponders House budget plan that’s short of what it wanted
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania’s Republican-controlled Legislature on Monday began what could be a long week as lawmakers worked again to try to end a four-month budget standoff with big borrowing and gambling expansion packages to backfill a projected $2.2 billion deficit... - AP

State Senate bill would boost Erie schools
State House to consider proposal that includes recurring funding. Language part of Senate bill meant to help end state budget stalemate. The state Senate on Monday revived the Erie School District’s hopes for $14 million in recurring additional state funding... - Erie Times-News

Gas-tax supporter now against it because of tradeoffs on health, environment
As a longtime supporter of the severance tax, I find myself in the unusual position of now opposing it. Although it would provide much-needed revenue for this year’s commonwealth budget, it is clear that Senate Republicans will not allow even a modest severance tax without exacting provisions that would... - Philadelphia Inquirer
**Wolf’s LCB Borrowing Plan Challenged In Court**
HARRISBURG (CBS) — As state senators continue their discussions on one plan to borrow money to help fund the state budget, a different plan being pursued by Governor Wolf is now facing a court challenge. On Friday, the Liquor Control Board took steps toward implementing Governor... - *KYW News Radio 1060*

**October 23**
**Pennsylvania Senate eyes House budget plan that’s short of what it wanted**
Amid a four-month budget standoff, the Pennsylvania Senate is returning to the Capitol to confront a House budget-balancing plan that falls well short of what Senate leaders and Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf had sought.... - *AP*

**Park planner concerned about state budget impact**
In September, Spring Twp. held a final public review of plans for the Lynn Sheaffer Dum Memorial Park near Elliottsburg. And now park planners wait. They’re waiting not only to hear from the state about whether they’ll receive grants for the first phases of the 69-acre park, but also whether a... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**Pennsylvania’s budget fight will come with its own price tag**
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania state government’s projected $2.2 billion deficit, and a protracted fight over how to fix it, will come with its own special price tag.... - *AP*

**October 22**
**PLCB hires experts to help carry out Wolf’s plan for cash infusion**
Gov. Tom Wolf’s plan to close the state’s deficit by monetizing future earnings of the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board is now in motion. The liquor control board on Friday by a 2-1 vote approved contracts with financial advisors and legal counsel to assist it with carrying out this.... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**Sure, Harrisburg’s a mess. But there are plenty of Pa. bright spots | Editorial**
We know, we know: The debate over Pennsylvania’s long-delayed 2017-18 budget is a slow-moving train wreck. And politics on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. is just awful. But that doesn’t mean there aren’t still a few bright spots in the Keystone State. So we’re going to take a few minutes today to focus on that.... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**Pennsylvania colleges want larger slice of state budget to grow, survive**
Pennsylvania’s budget-tightening mode has sent college officials scrambling to justify why state lawmakers should be prioritizing funding requests for higher education. At stake are steeper-than-planned tuition hikes, fewer financial aid options and the scaling down of extension programs that enroll students in.... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**With Pa. budget unbalanced, power struggle in Capitol**
In the face of the legislature’s continuing failure to balance Pennsylvania’s $32 billion budget, Gov. Wolf is taking unilateral action to finance and reorganize state government, raising
political tensions and legal questions over the limits of executive authority... - Philadelphia Inquirer

114 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than 16 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - Erie Times-News

House committee approves drilling tax bill, Bernstine says it will ‘crush jobs’
A bill that would implement a severance tax on natural gas drilling in Pennsylvania passed a state House committee Wednesday without the support of state Rep. Aaron Bernstine. Bernstine, R-10, New Beaver, is a member of the House Finance Committee that approved a plan to add a 3.2 percent drilling tax to the current Act... - Beaver County Times

Pennsylvania’s budget fight will come with its own price tag
Pennsylvania state government’s projected $2.2 billion deficit, and a protracted fight over how to fix it, will come with its own special price tag... - AP

Amid state budget battle, PLCB hires advisers for Wolf’s $1.25 billion borrowing proposal
The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board on Friday voted to hire financial and legal advisers to help pursue Gov. Wolf’s proposal to borrow $1.25 billion against future profits of the state’s alcoholic beverage monopoly, even as those profits are under pressure.... - Philadelphia Inquirer

October 20
The firestorm next time: Pa. is ill-prepared for next recession or budget
Economics is called the dismal science, and Pennsylvania seems intent on making it even gloomier. Jake Wheatley (Pa. House photo) The current budget debacle is bad enough: months-late, $2.2 billion in the red, still pursuing more borrowing despite the commonwealth’s sinking... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Lawmakers discard practical budget answer for more taxes solution
Pennsylvania lawmakers stuck for a budget solution rolled out their go-to argument this week, reviving the call for severance tax on gas drilling. The industry appears to be making a rebound in Pennsylvania, the nation’s No. 2 gas state thanks to Marcellus Shale deposits. And... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

October 19
Could latest Pa. budget plan be as good as it gets?
HARRISBURG – In the Pennsylvania Capitol on Wednesday, there was a sense that this may be as good as it gets. This is the latest revenue plan to pay for the state’s $32 billion budget to emerge late Tuesday from the GOP-controlled House. It centers on borrowing $1.5 billion, expanding gambling, siphoning money from some... - Philadelphia Inquirer
Good Thursday Morning, Fellow Seekers.

As we head into the penultimate furlong of the working week, there’s some reason for encouragement (however incremental) that Budget Debacle 2017 might soon to be coming to an end. That’s because Republican Senate leaders are now so exasperated by the... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

The budget stalemate in Harrisburg has frozen funding for universities to offer discounts to in-state students. Nate Morgus, like most other Penn State Behrend students, pays a reduced rate to attend the Harborcreek Township college. Morgus, a 20-year-old junior who lives in Butler, pays $17,290 a year in... - Erie Times-News

HARRISBURG — The state Senate may vote next week on the tax plan passed by the House, Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman said Wednesday. But before the senators do, they want some guidance from the governor or whether he is abandoning his plan to use future liquor system profits to... - Sunbury Daily Item

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania House Republicans have a budget plan. This time, they hope it sticks. The GOP-controlled House worked late into the night Tuesday to narrowly approve a revenue package, 102-88, to help pay for the $32 billion budget that passed more than three months ago.... - Philadelphia Inquirer

The exasperation surrounding Pennsylvania already a third of the way in the fiscal year without a completed budget is not lost on state lawmakers. It may be the one thing that could help to drive the budget stalemate to a conclusion. Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman said the House of Representatives’... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

The state House of Representatives passed a bill Tuesday night that represents one way to backfill the bulk of a $2.2 billion deficit in this year’s $32.0 billion state budget. The plan, like most considered in this cycle, relies mostly on borrowing, one-time fund transfers and other accounting maneuvers to belatedly balance... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania House Republicans have a budget plan. This time, they hope it sticks. The GOP-controlled House worked late into the night Tuesday to narrowly approve a revenue package, 102-88, to help pay for the $32 billion budget that passed more than three months ago.... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Pennsylvania House OKs new cash package to backfill deficit
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania’s Republican-controlled House of Representatives advanced its latest deficit-financing proposal Tuesday night that revolved around elements the House previously had rejected in a protracted budget standoff with the Senate and Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf.../... - AP

UPJ could face ‘devastating’ tuition spike, president says
Pennsylvania’s budget impasse is dragging toward a potentially “devastating” point for the University of Pittsburgh, Penn State and two other state-related schools, Pitt’s chancellor said Tuesday. And he worries the impact might extend well beyond the current budget... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

State House tries again with plan to balance budget
HARRISBURG — The state House voted 102-88 Tuesday to balance the state budget, in part, by borrowing heavily against the state's share of a settlement with the tobacco industry. The plan would also allow the state to begin collecting sales tax on transactions that take place on online marketplace sites, like eBay and... - Meadville Tribune

Pennsylvania House passes budget funding plan three months late
The Pennsylvania House voted Tuesday night on a funding package to pay for the state’s 3-month-old $32 billion budget without a major tax hike — unless you like fireworks and online shopping. Following the 102-88 vote in the Republican controlled House, the bill move... - Allentown Morning Call

October 17
UPT now jeopardized by state budget stalemate
Readers of The Titusville Herald have probably read the University of Pittsburgh’s advertisement that has appeared in the newspaper the past three days, in which the university is seeking partners for its Titusville campus. The university’s search for partner entities is now in jeopardy due to... - Titusville Herald

No budget? No problem - Welcome back to the show that never ends | Analysis
So there’s this: On the one hand, state House Republicans appear to have completely lost their collective ability to get a completed state budget across the goal line. On the other, four months of enforced captivity and Coyote-Into-The-Cliff Face negotiations with the GOP-majority state Senate and the Democratic... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

No idle threats: State-related universities need state funding
It should be abundantly clear to state lawmakers that failing to pass a revenue package is going to have grave consequences for Pennsylvania’s social services, public schools and institutions of higher learning. When would-be recipients of funds point out the precarious position they’re... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Our view: Budget mess shows Pennsylvania needs change
It’s high time to admit Pennsylvania’s system of government is irreparably broken. Look no further than the current budget mess that’s dragged on for almost four months longer than it ever should have. We know rehashing the details of the financial morass might make most... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

Will someone in Harrisburg please budge on the state budget?
The ISSUE Three and a half months after the June 30 deadline, Pennsylvania’s gridlocked government has yet to pass a revenue plan to wipe out the state’s projected $2.2 billion budget deficit. With the state General Assembly stymied thus far, Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf is bypassing the... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

Liquor-privatization fans smell a rat in Wolf’s $1.25 billion solution
In order to keep paying Pennsylvania’s bills without a revenue bill from the Republican-controlled Legislature, Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf intends to raise $1.25 billion from future profits of the state’s liquor system. Wolf’s choice of funding options feels personal to some lawmakers who have... - Reading Eagle

October 16
Video gaming jams progress on casino fix
Millions of dollars in taxable revenue is just waiting to be collected in Pennsylvania, but state lawmakers are reluctant to make it happen, according to the president of a professional organization lobbying for the legalization of video gaming terminals. A House bill (HB 271) that includes the legalization of video gaming... - Levittown Intelligencer

As 2018 looms, Pennsylvania in fiscal trouble
When word filtered out of Gov. Tom Wolf’s office in late August that Pennsylvania’s chief executive might be proposing what was described as a “bare bones” budget for 2018-19, the news didn’t provoke much surprise. That’s what happens during an election year when governors and... - Altoona Mirror

In-state tuition discounts could be nixed for students at four state-funded universities
Pennsylvania could be on a path to becoming the most unaffordable state in the nation for students to pursue a college education. It’s not a direction that Gov. Tom Wolf or state lawmakers say they want to head, but it’s where their collective failure to agree on a revenue plan to... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Pennsylvania explores new territory in budget fight
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania’s deficit-riddled finances are in new territory, as Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf assembles a package to balance the state’s budget without involvement from a Republican-controlled Legislature riven by ideological and provincial disputes... - AP

For public university students, state budget fight potentially as real as their wallets
For tens of thousands of Pennsylvania public university students, the state budget fight in
Harrisburg is now potentially as real as their wallets. State-related universities, in a series of statements, are upping the pressure on lawmakers returning to Harrisburg today. Those schools say... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Legislators skeptical of liquor loan bailout**
HARRISBURG — The Liquor Control Board has taken the first steps to borrow $1.25 billion to help balance the state budget, but many lawmakers remain unconvinced of the strategy. After the state House failed to pass a series of potential fixes to the budget, Gov. Tom Wolf, in frustration, abruptly announced Oct. 4 that he... - *Sunbury Daily Item*

**October 15**
**Legislators discuss budget impasse at Wilkes-Barre Chamber event**
Local state legislators were asked Friday for an update on the status of the budget impasse in Harrisburg. State Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski was the first to respond and set the tone. “We have none,” said Pashinski, D-Wilkes-Barre. Pashinski and four of his fellow Northeastern Pennsylvania colleagues —... - *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*

**Liquor store loan? Pa. shouldn’t bank on it**
By Nathan A. Benefield Have your trips to the liquor store been leaving your wallet a little lighter? That’s because the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, the agency behind our state-run liquor system, recently raised prices on 422 wine and liquor products. While no one wants to pay more to buy wine for dinner,... - *Easton Express-Times*

**Legislators from Lancaster County talk about uncertain fate of state budget stalemate**
State lawmakers from Lancaster County on Friday expressed some frustration and gave little indication of how they believe Pennsylvania officials may eventually compromise in the prolonged budget stalemate in Harrisburg. The nine legislators gave their thoughts on the budget and other topics... - *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*

**Penn State now says mid-year tuition hike a possibility**
Another state-related university is warning that it may impose a mid-year tuition increase unless it receives its overdue state appropriation for 2017-18. Penn State University says it has been unable to obtain assurances that it will receive its funding for the fiscal year that began July 1. As did the... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Pitt’s Titusville campus finds itself in crosshairs of state budget battle**
Titusville, population 5,600, has neither the bustle of a big city nor even a movie theater, yet for half a century the northwestern Pennsylvania community has had its own branch of a sprawling research university. But were the University of Pittsburgh to lose its state appropriation, it... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Pennsylvania explores new territory in budget fight**
Pennsylvania's deficit-riddled finances are in new territory, as Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf
assembles a package to balance the state’s budget without involvement from a Republican-controlled Legislature riven by ideological and provincial disputes... - AP

Support for Pitt shouldn’t even be an issue
As pointed out in the Post-Gazette editorial “Don’t Dare Defund Pitt: The State-Related Schools Cannot Be Budget Victims” (Oct. 11), the University of Pittsburgh is an asset of inestimable value to the city and to the state. As Amazon is considering sites for a new second headquarters, it is not... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Leaders must commit to crucial funding for Pitt and other state-related universities
“Veritas et Virtus,” the motto of the University of Pittsburgh, translates to “Truth and Virtue,” two principles that Pennsylvania’s leadership should take into consideration as they consider funding for our institutions of higher learning. As a proud University of Pittsburgh alumna and Pitt parent, I have... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

107 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than 15 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - Erie Times-News

October 13
Lots of tax talk at town hall meeting hosted by lawmaker in Cumru Township
Pocketbook issues were on the minds of senior citizens at an annual town hall meeting and ice cream social hosted by state Rep. Mark M. Gillen. The event Thursday was at The Heritage of Green Hills in Cumru Township. Gillen, a Robeson Township Republican, was asked about alleviating high... - Reading Eagle

Pennsylvania gets 2nd treasury loan to make payments on time
HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Treasury is extending a five-day, $700 million credit line to tide over the state government’s deficit-ridden finances... - AP

October 12
Mon Valley business leaders get state update during Chamber luncheon
An administrator from the state’s top business advocacy organization told local business leaders that Pennsylvania faces serious consequences unless it finds solutions for its current financial predicament. Thank you for Reading! Please log in, or sign up for a new account and purchase a subscription to... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

Editorial: Budget drama turning into horror show
The Issue: Gov. Tom Wolf plans to borrow against future revenues from liquor sales and the Farm Show Complex. Our Opinion: GOP lawmakers’ stand against tax hikes needs to be paired with a way to make ends meet. If it were tempted to make a film based on Pennsylvania’s recent budget... - Reading Eagle
**Wolf says he can’t ease Pitt financial problems without House GOP help**
As the University of Pittsburgh ponders a mid-year tuition increase because of the state’s ongoing budget impasse, Gov. Tom Wolf said Thursday morning that he could do little to help without action from the Republican-led House of Representatives. "I need the authorization" to release the nearly $150 million the... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Gov. Wolf touts administrative savings as budget stalemate raises specter of state tuition hikes**
Gov. Tom Wolf praised state workers Wednesday for saving taxpayers $217 million by devising and using new technology, energy efficiency and more favorable contracts with vendors. But Wolf might want to ask staff to triple their savings output if the state is going to make its traditional payments to four semi-public... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**If only Pa. could tax obstruction**
State lawmakers shuffled back to the Capitol last week to resume the hard work of failing to pass a budget. Meanwhile, state Sen. Scott Wagner of York County, who is seeking the Republican gubernatorial nomination, has offered some insight into the legislative malpractice.... - *Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald*

**How gambling in bars is holding up a budget deal for Pa.**
The budget stalemate in Pennsylvania isn’t about taxing gas extraction. That’s not going to happen this year. It isn’t about getting the state out of the liquor business. The State Stores workers’ union is too strong. Nor is it about weakening Gov. Wolf heading into next year’s election.... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**Wolf stumps in Erie for 'common-sense' Marcellus Shale tax**
Governor also says $14 million for Erie School District remains in state budget for 2017-18. Gov. Tom Wolf visited Erie on Wednesday to push for a quick end to the state budget deadlock that has dragged on for more than three months. One way to help resolve the stalemate, Wolf said, is for the General... - *Erie Times-News*

**Editorial: Region’s reps buck trends in state budget talks**
There are a lot of fingers being pointed these days in Harrisburg. That’s what happens when you approve a $32 billion spending plan and then spend the next three months trying to figure out how to fund it. You read that right. Our esteemed Legislature barely beat the deadline at the end of June by... - *West Chester Daily Local News*

**October 11**

**Temple president: In-state tuition discount ends if Pa. doesn't pass budget**
As Philadelphia's public university, Temple University plays a unique role. We are passionately dedicated to our mission of providing an educational experience that is accessible, affordable, diverse, high-quality, and engaged with our communities. That is who we are, and our... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*
No end in sight for budget crisis
It’s been more than 100 days since Pennsylvania’s June 30 budget deadline and lawmakers in Harrisburg are still stuck in neutral with the end goal of closing a $2.2 billion budget gap. They don’t seem to be all that close to a deal and instead are now offering up ideas that seem closer to wishful thinking than reality.... - Sunbury Daily Item

Pitt chancellor warns tuition hike possible midyear
Two years ago, the University of Pittsburgh as a state-related university clearly was a bargaining chip in a battle among politicians over what should be included in the state budget, Pitt Chancellor Patrick Gallagher said. It was a precarious spot no doubt for an institution that relies in part on... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pa.’s budget mess further threatens higher-ed
Among vast amounts of at-risk funding trapped in Pennsylvania’s inane budget impasse is money for in-state students at Temple, Pitt, Lincoln, and Penn State. It’s about $600 million. It makes a huge difference in tuition costs. Huge, as in five-figure discounts from what out-of-state students are... - Philadelphia Inquirer

No fruitful bi-partisanship, little voter power in Pa.
We wholeheartedly agree with Clearfield area state Rep. Scott Conklin’s “Enough is enough” opinion piece published in Saturday’s Express. Conklin is telling the General Assembly — the House and Senate — to stop the bullcrap in Harrisburg and get to work to adopt a fiscal year... - Lock Haven Express

Don’t dare defund Pitt: The state-related schools cannot be budget victims
Here are four good reasons for the Legislature and Gov. Tom Wolf to come up with a revenue plan in a hurry: the University of Pittsburgh, Penn State University, Temple University in Philadelphia and Lincoln University in Chester County. These four so-called state-related universities are the crown jewels of... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

October 10
Four months, no Pa. budget: Is there a better way?
To borrow a turn of phrase from the late, great Yogi Berra, Pennsylvania’s experiencing déjà vu all over again. In the recent past, the state has gone days or weeks without a compromise on spending and taxes. In 2015, it went more than eight months without a... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Temple president: In-state tuition discount ends if Pa. doesn’t pass budget
As Philadelphia’s public university, Temple University plays a unique role. We are passionately dedicated to our mission of providing an educational experience that is accessible, affordable, diverse, high-quality, and engaged with our communities. That is who we are, and our... - Philadelphia Inquirer
Toomey, Casey among the Senate’s oddest of ‘odd couples’ | Tuesday Morning Coffee
Good Tuesday Morning, Fellow Seekers. The inside Washington publication Roll Call runs down the Odd Couples of the United States Senate this Tuesday morning - and you’ll never guess who made the cut. Pennsylvania U.S. Sens. Bob Casey and Pat Toomey are among the Felix Ungers... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

Wolf announces plan to maintain funding for schools, human service providers
Government entities such as schools and health and human service providers that rely on state funding could be in danger as the budget deadlock in Harrisburg drags on. Gov. Tom Wolf announced Monday that the state will start accepting proposals for a "lease-leaseback" arrangement for the Pennsylvania Farm... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

On the matter of Pennsylvania’s budget stalemate | Editorial
Today is Oct. 10, 2017. Get the budget done. - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

House GOP saves booze monopoly
The state House Republican majority proved its ineptitude when, during the administration of Republican Gov. Tom Corbett, it failed to eliminate the state government wholesale and retail booze monopoly — one of its supposedly cherished goals. Now, doubling down on that incompetence, House GOP leaders have managed to... - *Scranton Times*

As the state budget churns: Pa.’s lone Wolf
As pumpkins replace summertime flower pots and forecasters predict winter’s wrath, the prognosticators of matters fiscal in Harrisburg haven’t a clue when or even if the Legislature and governor will come to terms on a 2017-18 state budget. More than 100 days overdue, a completed general fund budget that addresses... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

Gov. Wolf to lease Pa. Farm Show Complex to help plug budget deficit
Gov. Tom Wolf is preparing to move forward with his plan to lease the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center to a private operator in hopes of raising cash for the state budget. Initially proposed in his February budget address, Wolf announced Monday the state will now seek partners in a lease deal intended to bring an... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

Wolf to pursue Farm Show borrowing plan to plug deficit
HARRISBURG — Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf's administration said Monday that it will look to borrow against the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and Expo Center to help plug a projected $2.2 billion deficit and make payments to schools and human services providers... - *AP*

October 9
State of distress: The inexcusable failure to fund the state budget
This is no way to run a state government. Pennsylvania’s Legislature has failed to produce a revenue package to support the 2017-18 budget, so more than three months after the fiscal year began, a frustrated Gov. Tom Wolf has announced plans to borrow $1.25 billion to help keep the (more responsible) wheels of state government... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*
Gov. Tom Wolf did what he had to do on state budget | Editorials
THE ISSUE Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf said Wednesday that he is tired of waiting for Republican lawmakers to produce a plan to wipe out a projected $2.2 billion deficit and will look to borrow $1.2 billion against profits from the state-controlled liquor system to help patch it, The Associated Press... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

Hope alone won’t lure Amazon: Pennsylvanians may need to pay
Amazon’s hunt for a new headquarters has all the drama of a reality TV competition--and a cash prize for the winners, too. The participants must also make sacrifices for a chance of winning. Pennsylvania, like many other states, is working on an incentive package... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Gov. Wolf’s scary fairy tale, but it’s for real
The 47th governor of Pennsylvania, the 14th Democrat to hold the office, is suddenly making some noise. To some it sounds like clucking. For as we pass 100 days with no state budget and no signs of settlement, Gov. Wolf is playing the Little Red Hen. You know the story. Couldn’t get anybody to help her do anything so she... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Pa. House speaker accuses Gov. Wolf of pursuing ‘formula for failure’ in new video | Monday Morning Coffee
Good Monday Morning, Fellow Seekers. Pennsylvania House Speaker Mike Turzai isn't running for governor - at least not yet, maybe never - but in a new video posted to his official Facebook page, the suburban Pittsburgh Republican is looking and sounding a lot like a candidate.... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

October 8
Cheers and Jeers
CHEERS to Wikes-Barre City Council for voting unanimously to authorize an independent review of the city police department. The ongoing rancor between the police union and Chief Marcella Lendacky must be addressed to ensure the effectiveness of the department and the safety of the city.... - Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice

100 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than 14 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - Erie Times-News

Fish hatcheries could close if there’s no vote on raising revenues
In the battle for wildlife agency funding, the hip boot may now be on the other foot. Fish and Boat Commissioners have given executive director John Arway authority to slash $2 million in services if the state legislature does not act on raising license fees.... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
As GOP leaders fiddle, Wolf resorts to a payday loan | Editorial
Pennsylvania's three-month-old budget crisis has slipped from the ridiculous to the absurd -- a farce written and staged by the Republican House leadership. Move over, Beckett. Sit down and shut up, Ionesco. Oh, that this were fiction, not a drama impacting the lives and livelihoods... - Easton Express-Times

'Tax killers,' Libre and cellphones: Why the Pa. budget is 100 days late
Lawmakers beat their chests over passing a $32 billion spending plan for 2017-18 on June 30, the last day of the 2016-17 fiscal year. They figured it wouldn’t take long, maybe a week or two, to agree on how to pay for it. (And how to fill the $2.2 billion revenue deficit built into it).... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

October 6
If you think early childhood education is just snacks and nap time, you haven’t been paying attention | John L. Micek
On a fine, early fall morning in 2005, my wife and I made the most difficult choice we’d yet made as parents. A mere three months' into our daughter’s life, we packed her into her baby carrier, drove the 10 minutes or so to the other side of the Susquehanna River, and handed her over to a daycare provider we’d chosen with more... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

How fracking-friendly legislators are running PA into the ground
Pennsylvania hasn’t balanced its budget, is facing a $2 billion deficit, and has seen its credit rating drop, yet state legislators refuse to tap an available and abundant source of revenue. Their stubbornness has prompted Gov. Wolf to propose a risky plan to borrow... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Editorial: No end in sight to Harrisburg budget follies
Here’s a suggestion for our friends in Harrisburg: How about we take down that beautiful, shiny dome atop the state Capitol and replace it with a big top. That’s right, folks. Barnum & Bailey is back in town. Welcome to governing, Pennsylvania-style. In case you haven’t been paying attention – and we can only assume... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

No budget deal? No problem. 'I can do this indefinitely,' Wolf says
HARRISBURG — It had been a chaotic few hours in the state Capitol when House Minority Leader Frank Dermody strode out to the hallway outside the governor’s office to vent his frustration. Like most leaders in Harrisburg on Wednesday, the Democrat from Allegheny... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Wolf: ‘The door is always open’ on funding the budget
A day after Gov. Tom Wolf announced his plan to take unilateral action to fund the state budget, he indicated that he’s willing to work with Republicans in the state House of Representatives to find a long-term solution – as long as they’re able to come up with a plan that will... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat
If you think early childhood education is just snacks and nap time, you haven’t been paying attention | John L. Micek
On a fine, early fall morning in 2005, my wife and I made the most difficult choice we’d yet made as parents. A mere three months into our daughter’s life, we packed her into her baby carrier, drove the 10 minutes or so to the other side of the Susquehanna River, and handed her over to a daycare provider we’d chosen with more... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Penn State Eric Barron tells Pennsylvania to pass budget
Penn State’s budget had to be set in stone in time for the fiscal year that started July 1. Pennsylvania was also set to have its financial ducks in a row at that time, but three months later, there is no movement. On Wednesday, Penn State President Eric Barron asked the state House of... - State College Centre Daily Times

Enough Is Enough
Pennsylvania is over three months into the new fiscal year and a plan to responsibly fund the 2017-18 budget has not been brought up for a vote in either chamber of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. While legislative leaders and the Governor continue to negotiate a plan that relies on... - State College News

Our view: Wolf takes the reins in budget fight
The solution or at least some version of it has been laying on the table since the GOP-controlled state Senate in July passed a revenue plan backed by Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf to fund the state’s bipartisan $32 billion 2017-18 spending plan. The measure called for a bond, higher utility taxes and a severance tax on... - Erie Times-News

Pa. to fund opioid overdose antidote for first responders
Gov. Wolf said Thursday that Pennsylvania would supply 120,000 doses of the opioid overdose reversal medication naloxone to first responders. The budget includes $5 million for bulk purchases of Narcan Nasal Spray, a consumer-brand version of the emergency antidote, administration officials... - Philadelphia Inquirer

October 5
'I’m not going to play their games anymore'
HARRISBURG — Saying he was fed up with the inability of House Republicans to finish work on balancing the Pennsylvania budget, Gov. Wolf on Wednesday said that he will borrow more than $1 billion against the state’s liquor revenues. “Too many Republicans in the legislature are focused on the 2018... - Philadelphia Inquirer

No deficit of cheap tricks
The latest stroke of budgetary genius from the state House Republican majority is making Pennsylvania the most expensive place in the country to have a convention. But, hey, why should tourists be spared such inspired leadership? Exasperated Gov. Tom Wolf said Wednesday that he would borrow $1.2 billion... - Scranton Times
Collapse of state budget talks leaves higher ed aid in limbo
The collapse of budget negotiations left state aid to five Pennsylvania universities in limbo three months into the fiscal year, and a quiet and empty Pennsylvania Capitol on Thursday ensured that the schools will have to wait longer for the money, if they ever get it.... - AP

Penn State Urges Legislators to Pass Funding Bill
Penn State issued another statement on the ongoing Pennsylvania state budget impasse Wednesday night, urging the state House of Representatives to “pass the university’s funding bill and send it on to Governor Tom Wolf to ‘at least provide us with some assurance that we will be... - State College News

Local reps. respond to Wolf
Local Republican leaders are blasting back at Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, for blaming his opposing party for a three-month budget stalemate. State Rep. Matthew Dowling, R-Uniontown, and state Sen. Pat Stefano, R-Bullskin Township, both said that they feel the governor has not been... - Somerset Daily

Address trooper shortage
There are about 500 trooper vacancies within the Pennsylvania State Police, and Gov. Tom Wolf is a big part of the reason why that situation exists. He continues to reject filling all of the vacancies, although he reportedly has authorized hirings for 200 of them.... - Altoona Mirror

The 5 tweets that explain Pa’s increasingly ridiculous budget debate | Thursday Morning Coffee
Good Thursday Morning, Fellow Seekers. Over the years, we've repeatedly asked Wolf administration officials this one thing: What's it like when the boss, like, completely wigs out? Does Gov. Tom Wolf throw stuff? Does he rant and rave, channeling his inner Jonathan Edwards doing "Sinners... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Methane leak exposes faulty policy
Luck is not supposed to be the essential element of public safety regarding natural gas production and processing, but that’s about all that some Susquehanna County residents had going for them Sept. 2. No one was injured when the Harmony natural gas compressor station... - Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald

Gov. Tom Wolf, angry about budget deadlocks, will turn to liquor stores to close deficit
Gov. Tom Wolf threatened unilateral action to help close the state's budget deficit Wednesday, as another negotiated settlement with legislative Republicans faltered in the face of statewide opposition. 'This is not the way government is supposed to work. But I have to make... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Local reps give thumbs-down to new budget proposals
Efforts to come up with a revenue plan to balance this year’s state budget reportedly collapsed in Harrisburg on Wednesday. The question now comes down to what measures will be taken to
break the stalemate. Two proposals put on the table have drawn a thumbs-down from state Rep.... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

**Erie officials relieved as hotel tax hike falters**
The increase, meant to help balance state budget, would have put Erie County’s combined state and local hotel tax rate at 18 percent. A bill to hike the statewide hotel tax appeared to die quickly in Harrisburg on Wednesday, but not before raising concerns with tourism.... - Erie Times-News

**Collapse of Pennsylvania budget talks leaves higher ed aid in limbo**
HARRISBURG, Pa. The collapse of budget negotiations is leaving state aid to five Pennsylvania universities in limbo three months into the fiscal year.... - AP

**Budget talks blow up in Capitol blame game, jeopardizing universities’ public funding**
Budget talks imploded Wednesday as Gov. Tom Wolf accused House Republicans of putting the 2018 election ahead of the state’s financial well-being and Republicans countered by calling the Democratic governor incompetent. The political blame game started after the House failed to pass three tax.... - Allentown Morning Call

**October 4**
**SMASD among those waiting for end to budget impasse**
St. Marys Area School District Superintendent Brian Toth emphasized his disappointment that state government has not passed a budget during comments at Monday’s SMASD Board of Directors workshop. The state has been without a fully operational budget since June. The... - Saint Marys Daily Press

**Could a hotel tax be the linchpin to ending Pa.’s budget stalemate?**
In the grab bag of ideas of how to raise some new revenue to balance the 2017-18 state budget, lawmakers have seized on making hotel stays in Pennsylvania cost more. House and Senate members were taking a hard look on Tuesday at imposing a 5 percent statewide hotel tax that would be on top of the state’s 6 percent... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

**Pennsylvania lawmakers eye higher hotel tax in budget fight**
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania’s hotel tax rate would nearly double and Philadelphia and Pittsburgh would have the nation’s two highest combined state-and-city hotel taxes under a proposal surfacing Tuesday in the House of Representatives to fill state government’s $2.2 billion projected.... - AP

**‘I’m not going to play their games anymore’**
Gov. Wolf said Wednesday afternoon that he was fed up with the inability of House Republicans to pass a revenue measure to balance the Pennsylvania budget, and that he was going to seek to borrow more than $1 billion against the state’s liquor revenues. Using withering words, Wolf described House Republicans as beholden to... - Philadelphia Inquirer
The budget tango is an endless dance in Harrisburg halls
They did the budget tango again in Harrisburg Monday – again. There was lobbying in every hall and rumors just as prevalent, but no budget deal. Usually when that happens, a budget deal is not far off. We say that from experience. This year’s episode is the latest in a... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Fitzgerald: Hotel tax would ‘devastate’ Allegheny County
HARRISBURG — Raising hotel taxes in the state by 5 percent to balance the budget would "devastate" Allegheny County, county Executive Rich Fitzgerald said Wednesday morning. House Republicans shocked the industry when they began floating a plan Tuesday afternoon to tax hotels in the state 5 percent on top of the 6... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Legislators consider hotel tax to balance Pa. budget
HARRISBURG — Philadelphia would be number one, with Pittsburgh a close second. In hotel taxes, that is. The latest proposal to end Pennsylvania’s stubborn budget stalemate could make hotel taxes in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh the highest in the nation, according to industry figures.... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Raising Pennsylvania’s hotel tax would be ‘devastating’ for Pittsburgh economy, officials say
The head of the VisitPittsburgh tourism agency said a proposal to hike Pennsylvania’s hotel tax rate would negatively impact the city and Allegheny County, especially efforts to attract large-scale conventions that pump millions of dollars into the local economy.... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Gov. Tom Wolf, angry about budget deadlocks, will turn to liquor stores to close deficit Gov. Tom Wolf threatened unilateral action to help close the state’s budget deficit Wednesday, as another negotiated settlement with legislative Republicans faltered in the face of statewide opposition. "This is not the way government is supposed to work. But I have to make... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

October 3
A new Pa. state budget flashpoint: Whether to tax commercial storage
This post was updated at 11:21 p.m. Monday with videotaped comments from Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman, R-Centre County, on the ongoing state budget deliberations. Efforts to fix Pennsylvania’s unbalanced state budget hit a new flashpoint Monday, as industry and some lawmakers pushed back against a plan to end a... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

No action on latest bid to end 3-month Pennsylvania budget stalemate
HARRISBURG — Lawmakers returned to the Pennsylvania Capitol amid a three-month-old budget stalemate Monday, but optimism from top Republican lawmakers about an evolving proposal to fill a $2.2 billion revenue gap did not translate into action... - AP
Bus service start date delayed by budget impasse
LOCK HAVEN — The proposed express bus route from Williamsport to this region and back might have started Monday, Sept. 25. Yesterday, the date of Monday, Nov. 6 was discussed, but that starting date is not certain. William E. Nichols Jr., general manager of River Valley Transit, and two... - Lock Haven Express

Opposition grows to warehousing tax amid budget stalemate
An evolving proposal to fill Pennsylvania’s $2.2 billion projected deficit hit so much opposition over extending the sales tax to business-to-business storage and warehousing that it sent top lawmakers scrambling to find a substitute Tuesday, amid a stubborn budget stalemate... - AP

Obstruction that’s costly
State lawmakers shuffled back to the Capitol Monday to resume the hard work of failing to pass a budget that they were supposed to finish by July 1. Meanwhile, state Sen. Scott Wagner of York County, who is seeking the Republican gubernatorial nomination, has offered some insight into the... - Hazleton Standard-Speaker

A budget deal can’t come at the expense of clean air and water | PennLive letters
The natural gas industry’s heavy hand in communities across Pennsylvania has led to rampant pollution of our air and water. These instances are not without consequence: As a concerned citizen and mother, I concur with the many studies that have found emissions of methane by this industry, along... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

October 2
It’s Rep. Rabb, Part III
When I ask freshman Philadelphia State Rep. Chris Rabb what he thinks of the ongoing state budget impasse, he doesn’t exactly hold back. “I would have to use words I don’t usually use in public,” he says. “It boggles the mind how dysfunctional this process is ... I... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Lawmakers return amid effort to end 3-month budget stalemate
Lawmakers are back in the Pennsylvania Capitol amid a three-month-old budget stalemate, but optimism about an evolving proposal to fill a $2.2 billion revenue gap isn’t translating into action... - AP

Legislators give views on impasse
LOCK HAVEN — Counties are worried they will have to foot the bill for state mandates without any state dollars. Penn State and three other universities are worried they won’t see any appropriations from Harrisburg. The Pennsylvania state government’s credit rating has fallen and, for... - Lock Haven Express

LVEDC warns of ‘job-killing’ proposed warehouse tax
With state legislators set to return Monday to Harrisburg, the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. has warned of a “job-killing” proposed warehouse tax in the current budget
PA Senate Returns Amid Renewed Optimism For Budget Resolution
HARRISBURG, PA (CBS) — The state Senate will be in the capitol Monday for a previously unscheduled session day amid signs of movement toward resolving a months-long budget stalemate. The House was already scheduled to be in but the Senate chamber was supposed to be dark this week.... - KYW News Radio 1060

State considers monitor for Erie schools
General Assembly reviewing bills in which oversight would be in exchange for $14 million in additional state aid. Erie School District officials have always said they expected increased state oversight in exchange for the district getting $14 million in additional aid from Harrisburg.... - Erie Times-News

State considers monitor for Erie schools
General Assembly reviewing bills in which oversight would be in exchange for $14 million in additional state aid. Erie School District officials have always said they expected increased state oversight in exchange for the district getting $14 million in additional aid from Harrisburg.... - Erie Times-News

Lawmakers return amid effort to end 3-month budget stalemate
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Lawmakers are to return to the Pennsylvania Capitol amid a three-month-old budget stalemate and expect to be briefed on the details of an evolving proposal to fill a $2.2 billion revenue gap... - AP

State revenue up 3.5 percent in September
Pennsylvania’s general fund revenue in September was $2.7 billion, a 3.5 percent increase from September 2016, according to a report by the Independent Fiscal Office. The fiscal year-to-date figures are also up with the state collecting $6.9 billion since July, a 4.8 percent increase from the first quarter of 2016.... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

October 1
Hey, Pa. lawmakers - here's some budget advice from a weary voter | The Top 5 Letters to the Editor of the Week
A school isn't a success or failure based on test scores alone. am writing in support of a comprehensive school grading protocol and against high stakes, one number grading of schools. As a parent of children in Pa. public schools, I oppose using high stakes testing to grade schools... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Sunday pops
Last month, Standard & Poor's — which downgraded Pennsylvania's credit rating — also downgraded China's credit rating (after rival credit-rater Moody's had done so in May), Bloomberg reported. “China's prolonged period of strong credit growth has increased its economic and... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
September 29

**House GOP sees progress in overdue Pennsylvania budget talks**

HARRISBURG >> A spokesman for Pennsylvania House Republicans says recent talks to resolve the state’s three-month-old budget stalemate have been productive, and there could be a breakthrough next week... - AP

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September 28

**High court revives suit over how Pennsylvania's public schools are funded**

HARRISBURG — A panel of judges ruled Tuesday that the power to make decisions on school funding rests with the General Assembly and not the courts... - AP

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**PSU president to students, alums - Help us get the budget done | Thursday Morning Coffee**

Good Thursday Morning, Fellow Seekers. If we know one thing about Penn State students and alumni, it’s that they’re a noisy and enthusiastic bunch. And with the school’s state funding on the line, the university’s top executive is calling on them to get noisy... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

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**Pennsylvania Budget Remains In Limbo**

HARRISBURG, Pa. (CBS) — As September winds to a close, the prospects remain uncertain for a resolution to Pennsylvania’s months-old standoff over how to fully fund the state’s budget. It’s been two-and-a-half months since the budget became law. It’s been more than two weeks since the state House pushed through a revenue... - KYW News Radio 1060

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**Stop voter intimidation**

The state House Republican majority that has brought about yet another downgrade of the state’s creditworthiness, by refusing to pass an honest budget, apparently has been distracted. It has a constitutional obligation to pass a balanced budget, but a political priority to suppress... - Scranton Times

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**McGinnis’ rant boosts recycling support**

State Rep. John McGinnis’ rant against recycling at the most recent Logan Township supervisors meeting didn’t go unnoticed at a meeting Tuesday of the organization that operates curbside recycling programs in the four Blair County municipalities mandated by the state to do so.... - Altoona Mirror

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**Pennsylvania budget woes affecting school choice funding**

Logos Academy is still recovering from financial hardship caused by the lengthy state budget impasse two years ago, and delays in implementation of a state tax-credit program this year are threatening further harm. Aaron Anderson, CEO of the private K-12 York City school, said this is the... - York Dispatch

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September 27
Louis M. Shucker: Will Pennsylvania close for business?
"PENNSYLVANIA WELCOMES YOU," said the big sign as we drove up Interstate 81 from Maryland and entered the state. However, due to the state’s failure to complete its budgeting process some three months after it was due, those signs will be coming down soon. State troopers will be stationed on the...

Fish commission wants license fee hike, threatens to cut stocking, close hatcheries
HARRISBURG – The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is threatening to make $2 million in spending cuts, by closing hatcheries and reducing the number of locations where fish are stocked if the Legislature doesn’t approve a plan to increase the cost of a fishing license by 30 percent....

Governor checks out local sites
The budget stalemate between Gov. Tom Wolf and the Republican-controlled state house is taking a toll on small towns like Tunkhannock. Wolf made a stop in the borough to tout progress, but said the impasse is preventing state funding from getting where it’s needed....

89 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than 12 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant...

Budget deficit violates state constitution
Spend first, and ask questions later. That seems to be the philosophy of our state legislators and Gov. Tom Wolf for the past two years. In each case, they have agreed to a spending plan but not how to pay for it. As we are about to enter the fourth month of a half-completed budget, even...

Want real tax fairness? Toss Pa.’s retirement income exemption | Opinion
By Barry Shutt It’s a song sung with fervor by most politicians: I don’t want to raise taxes on "hard working Pennsylvanians." In the 2017-18 budget battle in Harrisburg, it’s been sung as a chorus by incumbent Legislators harmonizing like Gospel singers at a tent revival on...

Letter: State House members disgrace themselves
Letter: State House members disgrace themselves

Barron Asks Penn Staters to Contact Legislators as State Budget Impasse Continues
In the midst of a Pennsylvania state budget impasse, Penn State President Eric Barron wrote a letter published on Tuesday urging Pennsylvania residents in the Penn State community to contact legislators. The state passed a partial spending bill in July, but did not pass a...
Thanks, Harrisburg: Counties and schools about to suffer
It’s that time of year again in Pennsylvania: a time of autumn leaves, football games, and local governments scrambling desperately to find the money they need to operateThat last item shouldn’t be on the list. The state budget was supposed to be done before the Fourth of July.
By... - Philadelphia Inquirer

September 26
88 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than 12 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - Erie Times-News

Does Amazon offer reliable politicians?
Amazon, the giant online retailer, has created a scramble among states and cities to host what it calls its second headquarters. The quest for the massive project, which Amazon said will create 50,000 permanent jobs and $34 billion in investment, resembles the global... - Scranton Times

As they finish the budget, Gov. Wolf, lawmakers need to protect our air and water | Opinion
By Joseph O. Minott Gov. Tom Wolf is aiming to finalize a compromise budget deal by October 1. Working across party lines is good, unless it means balancing the budget on the back of our health and environment. We need the governor - along with House and Senate leaders - to step up now... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

No budget, no pay
Kudos and more kudos to Robert J. Scholl for his letter to the editor stating that the state government officials (legislators and bureaucrats) should have their paychecks stopped until a rational budget and the means to pay for it are established. They are not doing their jobs (or avoiding doing) and should not be paid... - Allentown Morning Call

September 25
State’s disaster funding unclear
If ever there was a time to consider dipping into a rainy day fund, it would be after the rainiest day in recorded U.S. history. When Hurricane Harvey struck Texas last month — dropping record-setting rain around Houston and killing dozens of people — government agencies... - Altoona Mirror
The Top 10 reasons why Harrisburg will never get an Amazon HQ
So we'll give The Harrisburg Regional Chamber/CREDC plenty of credit ... ... for sheer chutzpah. It was cheering to learn this Monday that the regional economic development body is mulling whether to throw its hat in the ring to lure a new Amazon corporate headquarters to the midstate. - Penn Live, Patriot-News

In Pa. school-funding maze, formula for equity elusive
Near a laundromat and a grocery store in a commercial strip of downtown Reading, the 10th and Penn Elementary School's aging hallways are getting a needed paint job. As with most of the schools in the Reading School District, the state Department of Education classifies it as "historically... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Vape tax dooms dozens of shops across Pennsylvania
Dozens of Pennsylvania "vape shops" closed as quickly as they opened over the last year, in the wake of a 40 percent state tax on vaping products. Vaping is a smoking alternative that works by vaporizing nicotine-laced liquid. The practice become increasingly popular over the last few years, and an... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

In a revenue hole, Pa. lawmakers keep digging | Turkeys and Trophies
Pennsylvania's budget crisis, 12 weeks and counting, is having real-life consequences. A week ago Gov. Tom Wolf announced that, absent a spending bill to fill a $2.2 billion deficit, the state will hold off on paying $1.7 billion to school districts and Medicaid insurers. On Wednesday, Standard... - Easton Express-Times

What could the state's environmental fund budget battle mean for Bucks?
They call them "hard numbers" for a reason. They're verifiable, immutable, and theoretically, not subject to debate. But there's little agreement about what the hard numbers are between Bucks and Montgomery County's Republican state representatives, as lawmakers in Harrisburg wrangle with potentially using hundreds of millions... - Levittown Bucks County Courier Times

Credit rating downgrade a wake-up call
Pennsylvania government and state taxpayers will have to live with ramifications from the commonwealth's latest credit downgrade, regardless of when full funding of the $32 billion 2017-18 state budget, passed nearly three months ago, finally is accomplished... - Altoona Mirror

Cut state police funding
The state of confusion known as Pennsylvania has a deficit of around $2 billion. I remember reading that the Pennsylvania State Police inhales that much in funding. Stop funding them. It would make liberals happy since they believe we have too many police already. Conservatives would be happy since it would stop the talk of... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

SYSTEM RIGGED FOR GAS DRILLERS
The most visible sign of the gas-drilling industry's profound influence over state policy is the
Legislature’s refusal to impose a fair extraction tax on the industry even as the state government faces a $2.2 billion deficit. But a piece of the revenue bill passed July 27 by the... - *Uniontown Herald-Standard*

**87 days without a complete state budget**
The state Legislature is more than 12 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - *Erie Times-News*

**She’s one angry state rep**
Kate Harper is not happy. Not with the legislature. Not with its leaders. Not with Gov. Wolf. Not with me. So I get this long email, subject-lined, “You missed the story.” Harper is a Montgomery County House Republican, a 17-year incumbent, previously a decade-plus Lower Gwynedd Township supervisor, so... - *Philadelphia Daily News*

**Gas tax stifles growth**
As the state’s budget debate drags on, we’ve seen encouraging signs of principled leadership from some in Harrisburg who are committed to creating an environment that encourages job and economic growth opportunities. Unfortunately, some remain singularly focused on jamming... - *Scranton Times*

**Video games in bars: the latest act of insanity by Pa. legislature**
Pennsylvanians in the future will surely look back on 2017 as the year the state legislature crossed the line from desperation to madness. Its desperation over balancing the budget has led to folly after folly. One will be the imposition of a $1 billion debt to meet the state’s... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**September 24**
**Once again, Harrisburg gets it wrong**
Decades of deficits have caught up with Pennsylvania’s state government, so much so that Gov. Tom Wolf recently announced that, for lack of money, the state would delay more than $1.7 billion in payments it owes to Medicaid insurers and school districts. And with that, talk of tax increases is not far behind.... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**State inertia crushes cities**
Given that the Legislature can’t even bring itself to pass a constitutionally required balanced state budget, it is not likely to do its job and foster modern, efficient, cost-effective government at the local level. That is tragic because, without state intervention, scores of cities... - *Scranton Times*
Pennsylvania’s ugly budget fight runs into Amazon courtship

September 22
Our view: Pa. lawmakers to blame for credit downgrade
The lessons of the shameful, nine-month 2015-16 state budget impasse should have lasted a lifetime. Instead, lawmakers, especially House Republicans, are again resorting to ineffectual and damaging trench warfare at the expense of those they are elected to serve. The GOP-controlled Legislature approved a bipartisan $32...

Court must end lawlessness in Pennsylvania budgeting
For nearly three months, state lawmakers have been scrambling to pay for the budget they passed in June. And Gov. Tom Wolf, who allowed this unbalanced budget to become law, has done little more than insist that tax hikes be part of the final deal. Now, Standard & Poor’s has downgraded Pennsylvania’s bond rating, citing...

A state budget that leaves no corporation behind | Opinion
There is no mystery about the Pennsylvania budget stalemate. Jill Sunday Bartoli (PennLive file) Jill Sunday Bartoli (PennLive file) Your state legislators know where their bread is buttered: By multinational corporations and billionaires. If you want to know why your state legislator refuses to tax gas companies...

Severance tax no panacea for Pa.
Pennsylvania legislators looking to impose higher taxes on shale-gas extraction under the guise of substantively closing the commonwealth’s multibillion-dollar budget shortfall should look elsewhere. Not only would any revenues generated be a drop in the budget-deficit bucket, even under...

Tax collector under fire for delays withdraws from election
A Snyder County tax collector who has angered taxpayers, county, municipal and school officials by not depositing tax payments promptly for more than a year has formally withdrawn from seeking a third term in November. Pat Nace, director of the county’s Board of Elections, said Center Township...

Counties still smarting from last Pa. budget impasse, fret yet again
During the last Pennsylvania budget impasse, the Crime Victims’ Center of Chester County was on the verge of closing its doors after more than 40 years. Then an unidentified woman who had read about the plight of the agency, which provides counseling for sexual-assault and other crime victims and...

State leaders need to do their jobs
Budgets matter. They are critical to our 560 Beaver County Chamber of Commerce businesses and organizations, and they should matter to all of us as residents of the great Commonwealth
of Pennsylvania. Our own chamber budget is a reflection of what we intend to accomplish... - *Beaver County Times*

**Governor talks about state budget during stop at Mansfield school**
MANSFIELD — Gov. Tom Wolf spoke about the budget stalemate during a visit with elementary students in the Southern Tioga School District in Mansfield on Thursday. In his visit of the area, Wolf toured Warren L. Miller Elementary School as part of a tour across the northern tier.... - *Williamsport Sun-Gazette*

**Pa. state treasurer has a lot on his plate: paying the state's bills, rebuilding his office's image and more**
State Treasurer Joe Torsella is viewed by House Republicans as partly responsible for Pennsylvania now having its lowest S&P Global Ratings in 39 years. Torsella's refusal to lend the state’s general fund money from the short-term investment pool to pay bills while work continues on balancing... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**Pennsylvania Treasurer has become a player in the state budget stalemate**
Pennsylvania Treasurer Joe Torsella swears he is not trying to be a “sixth negotiator” on the still-unfinished state budget, referring to the protracted talks between the General Assembly’s four legislative caucuses and Gov. Tom Wolf. He is, however, trying to be the best steward that he can be of 12.8... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**House committed to its plan**
Despite the Pennsylvania Senate voting down the House’s revenue package on Wednesday, spokesman for the Republican Caucus Stephen Miskin said the House Republicans are sticking to their plan to perform an internal fund transfer to cover the deficit. “There is no question that... those transfers are going to... - *Titusville Herald*

**September 21**
**Force negotiations**
Nobody is supposed to be above the law. Yet our government — at all levels —ignores both the state and federal constitutions, even though they must swear (or affirm) to obey them before they can take office. In this case, the governor can propose a budget, but the Legislature is the... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**County keeping watch on state budget stalemate**
WILKES-BARRE — Luzerne County is watching Harrisburg. County administration is preparing in case the state budget impasse continues to the point where county services are impacted. “We’re in a much better position than we were in 2015 because we’ve been proactive with this, taking steps to make sure that our... - *Wilkes-Barre Citizens’ Voice*

**Far right responsible for impasse**
The reason Republicans have been unable to pass any significant legislation on the national level, despite controlling both the legislative and executive branches, is the extremist element on
the far right of the party. It is this same element of the party within the Pennsylvania Legislature... - Allentown Morning Call

**How should Pa. stop future budget fiascos?**
he state Legislature approved a budget on time (June 30) with a catch: No money was approved to pay for it. That's what led to a summer of failed negotiations and proposals that had the state on the verge of a fiscal crisis. And this isn't the first time the state has faced such a budget... - Allentown Morning Call

**Gaming grant to help fund Corry historical survey**
CORRY — Gaming revenues from Presque Isle Downs & Casino may help preserve Corry’s past. The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority has awarded a $9,530 grant to the Corry Area Historical Society to help pay for a survey of downtown buildings and neighboring homes to determine their historical significance... - Erie Times-News

**S&P Downgrades Pa. Credit As Budget Standoff Continues**
Governor Tom Wolf has warned about it for months...and now, Standard and Poor's has downgraded Pennsylvania’s credit as the state’s budget remains unbalanced. Citing the budget stalemate and the state’s chronic structural budget imbalance, Standard and Poor’s Wednesday lowered Pennsylvania’s... - KYW News Radio 1060

**Port Authority could see 5 percent cut in service under latest Pa. funding plan**
The latest in proposed cuts to the Port Authority to help fund the state budget would result in a 5 percent cut in service if approved, the authority said Thursday. David Donahoe, the authority's interim CEO, told board members at a committee meeting that the process of funding the budget isn't done yet,... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**Messy and messier: The state budget standoff is a debacle as usual**
Messy and messier: The state budget standoff is a debacle as usual The initial impact of the state’s 2-month-old budget standoff landed Friday, when Gov. Tom Wolf froze about $1.2 billion in Medicaid payments to insurers who cover the state’s poor and vulnerable. Insurers said they... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**As Pennsylvania’s credit rating is downgraded, Senate rejects House budget bill**
Pennsylvania’s ongoing budget and political gridlock has hurt taxpayers in the eyes of Wall Street money managers. This morning, bond rating company S&P Global Ratings made good on its months-old threat to lower Pennsylvania’s bond rating and also warn investors of the state’s failure to meet its “moral obligation”... - Allentown Morning Call

**With challengers circling, Wolf’s approval ratings hang steady in new poll | Thursday Morning Coffee**
HARRISBURG -- As he heads into what’s likely to be a bruising 2018 general election campaign, more than half of Pennsylvania voters are giving Gov. Tom Wolf the thumbs-down on his job
performance. But before his one of his would-be opponents start celebrating, they need... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

**Erie schools explore increased bus service**
School district would reduce radius for elementary students, possibly middle school students. The Erie School District is considering expanding its bus service for elementary school students and possibly middle school students. The change would reduce the distance those students must live from school... - Erie Times-News

**Hanna talks state budget with constituents**
At a town hall Wednesday, State Rep. Mike Hanna, D-Lock Haven, discussed the state of the budget with his constituents. While lawmakers passed an almost $32 billion spending plan in June, they have yet to pass a revenue bill — putting the state in the third month... - State College Centre Daily Times

**In West Pottsgrove, pre-K advocates press for increased state funding**
WEST POTTSGROVE >> Wednesday marked the day that the school district’s first 20 Pre-K students took their seats at West Pottsgrove Elementary School. So perhaps it was appropriate that on the same day, in the same school, educators gathered to release the results of a survey on the benefits of... - Pottstown Mercury

**#PaBudget Armageddon: Send us your questions for state Treasurer Joe Torsella**
So it’s nearly October and Pennsylvania still doesn’t have a fully complete state budget. Now what? Well, one of the people who holds the answer to that question - or at least the keys to the state’s bank accounts - will meet with the PennLive Editorial Board at 1:30 p.m. this Thursday afternoon to supply some... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

**Port Authority could see 5 percent cut in service under latest Pa. funding plan**
The latest in proposed cuts to the Port Authority to help fund the state budget would result in a 5 percent cut in service if approved, the authority said Thursday. David Donahoe, the authority's interim CEO, told board members at a committee meeting that the process of funding the budget isn’t done yet,... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**Senate rejects House GOP plan; S&P downgrades state’s credit rating**
A solution to the state’s $2.2 billion budget gap continues to elude lawmakers after senators shot down a no-new-taxes plan that House Republicans passed last week by a single vote. By a 43-7 vote Wednesday, Sept. 20, the Senate rejected the House GOP’s plan to fill the multibillion-dollar hole by borrowing $1 billion against... - York Dispatch

**SEN. BOB MENSCH: Pennsylvania’s financial state is getting worse**
As I write this in mid-September, Pennsylvania is without a final budget. In the past decade, we’ve had on-time budgets in only four years. The question is why? For a very long time I’ve been arguing that our deficits, along with our budget stalemates, are predictable given the lack... - Pottstown Mercury
Conservation funding in state budget cross hairs
Some $500,000 worth of important community projects — already underway throughout Westmoreland County — could come to an immediate halt if the Pennsylvania Senate adopts the state budget proposed by the House. The impact will be felt almost immediately in Delmont, Murrysville, Penn... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Pennsylvania credit downgrade leads to finger-pointing
S&P Global Ratings downgraded Pennsylvania’s credit rating Wednesday, citing a history of late budgets. The action caused a lot of dramatic words from state leaders and many calls to settle the budget, but no signs of compromise. Wednesday's downgrade marked S&P’s sixth negative action or... - Reading Eagle

Legislative malpractice strikes again
The state Senate budget bill is bad but substantially better than the farcical House version. But they share the decidedly bad idea of borrowing vast amounts of money to cover a yawning $2.2 billion budget deficit that should be covered through honest distribution of the tax burden and... - Scranton Times

Lawmakers put state’s credit at risk
Gov. Tom Wolf this week expressed optimism that the Republican-controlled Legislature could figure out a way within the next few days to fund a $2.2 billion budget gap that would finally end this year’s beleaguered state budget process. As of today, state lawmakers are 83 days late in delivering on their... - Sunbury Daily Item

Organizations anxious over lack of state budget
Standard and Poor’s downgraded Pennsylvania’s credit rating Wednesday morning because of the state Legislature’s ongoing inability to pass a budget, inaction that received strong condemnation from Gov. Tom Wolf. In a news release, Wolf said the credit downgrade should be a “wake-up... - Beaver County Times

Senators reject House budget plan, push for final resolution
HARRISBURG — The state Senate voted 43-7 to reject a plan passed by the state House last week that would have balanced the state budget without raising taxes, but relied heavily on tapping funds House Republicans say have more money than needed. The Senate move means that when House members return to the Capitol next... - Meadville Tribune

Dissipating budget urgency
Whatever state-budget urgency Harrisburg had seems to be dissipating, not intensifying as it should. Democrat Gov. Tom Wolf had already delayed $1.7 billion-plus in payments when he eased pressure on lawmakers Monday by saying he thinks the budget can be completed by Oct. 1 “and we can manage the state up through that... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
Job approval down for Wolf, Trump in Pennsylvania
Despite a months-long legislative battle over Pennsylvania's budget, which led Wednesday to a downgrade of the state's credit rating, the percentage of Pennsylvanians with positive views of Gov. Tom Wolf’s performance has fallen only slightly, the latest Franklin & Marshall College Poll shows.... - Reading Eagle

September 20
Our view: Budget impasse stymies Warner rehab
For a few brief months, it seemed an end to Erie’s long wait for an updated and expanded Warner Theatre was within reach. Erie, home to a vibrant local theater and music scene, would finally get a new stage and amenities at the historic Warner, improving the region’s... - Erie Times-News

Pa. Senate rejects House revenue package; sets up next play in Pennsylvania budget drama
The Pennsylvania Senate officially stuck a fork in the state House Republicans’ $2.3 billion revenue package Wednesday. The hope is, that action - in the ways of the Legislature - will actually give a shove forward to final resolution of a budget impasse that has begun.... - PennLive, Patriot-News

As Pennsylvania’s credit rating is downgraded, Senate rejects House budget bill
Pennsylvania’s ongoing budget and political gridlock has hurt taxpayers in the eyes of Wall Street money managers. This morning, bond rating company S&P Global Ratings made good on its months-old threat to lower Pennsylvania’s bond rating and also warn investors of the state’s failure to meet its “moral obligation”... - Allentown Morning Call

82 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than 11 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - Erie Times-News

Local reps are ‘good with’ state budget
Local lawmakers are hopeful they are closer to finally settling a $2.2 billion budget shortfall. The latest plan, which relies less on budget transfers from excess accounts and more on other funding plans, is expected to be considered by the Senate as early as today.... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Does S&P’s credit downgrade of Pa.’s rating bring it to its lowest level?
Pennsylvania’s downgrading of its credit rating on Wednesday by S&P’s Global Ratings due to the ongoing budget stalemate brings its rating down to the lowest it has been in 39 years. The downgrade from a AA- rating to an A+ rating means the state’s ability to meet its financial commitments is "more susceptible to the adverse... - PennLive, Patriot-News
Pennsylvania takes credit ratings hit amid budget fight
Pennsylvania's credit rating took its latest hit Wednesday, another black eye in a nearly three-month budget stalemate that has pitted Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf and the Republican-controlled Senate against the Republican-controlled House of Representatives... - AP

Standard & Poor's downgrades Pennsylvania's credit amid budget stalemate
Rating agency Standard & Poor's downgraded Pennsylvania's credit a notch Wednesday, citing the state's stalemated budget negotiations and inability to pay all its bills. Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf and Republican leaders in the state Legislature — who for nearly three months have failed to reach an agreement to fund... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Pennsylvania's broken budgeting process needs fixing, and fast
THE ISSUE Three months after the start of the fiscal year, Pennsylvania lawmakers are still trying to find a way to pay for the $32 billion budget passed by the Legislature in July. There is currently a $2.2 billion gap in the proposed budget. Late last week, Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, announced that... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

The Heron's Nest: More about race; a timeless Rhys Hoskins at-bat
Yesterday we took the always dicey proposition of talking about race in America. Today we expanded on it on our editorial page. We have a problem. Yesterday's editorial was sparked by an incident that took place on the campus of Cabrini University in Radnor. An ugly racial epithet was scrawled... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

REP. MUSTIO: Pennsylvania has a solution to balance the budget, will we use it?
Pennsylvania finds itself amidst a budget impasse. To put the severity of the situation into perspective, we are dealing with a $2.2 billion budget gap. We must all work together to help fill this hole, while at the same time helping local, small businesses.... - Pottstown Mercury

How fast is your school's internet? 5 things to know about education today
Something that’s definitely not standing still? Runners. It’s marathon season. Thousands of runners will take to the streets of Pittsburgh on Sunday to run the Great Race, a breezy 10 kilometer race through the city. Meanwhile, runners in Germany will tackle the Berlin Marathon. Some are in... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Pa. budget impasse leads to credit downgrade
HARRISBURG – As the budget deadlock in the Capitol drags on, a credit rating agency on Wednesday delivered a hard fiscal punch to Pennsylvania: a credit downgrade. Standard & Poor’s lowered Pennsylvania’s bond rating a notch, citing the state’s out-of-balance budget, its more than $2 billion... - Philadelphia Inquirer
Budget stalemate costs Pennsylvania a credit downgrade
Pennsylvania's future bond issues may have gotten just a little more costly. That's because one of the world's leading credit ratings agencies on Wednesday slapped a downgrade on the Keystone State's government, owing largely to the flood of bad fiscal news coming from Harrisburg this summer. - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

State Senate rejects no-tax House budget bill, proposes conference
The state Senate declined to take up a no-tax proposal from the House to fund the state's budget, proposing instead that the chambers form a new committee next week to hash out a deal. The House reconvenes Monday. If representatives agree to the Senate strategy, the committee would work to find a compromise between the no-tax... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

COMMENTARY A dereliction of duty in Harrisburg
The Pennsylvania Constitution requires that a balanced budget be enacted by June 30 of each year. Regrettably, it makes no provision for any penalty to be imposed upon our elected officials if they refuse to do their jobs. The dereliction of duty displayed by our legislators has consistently made... - *Washington Observer-Reporter*

Do your jobs and fix the state budget mess
Do your jobs and fix the state budget mess The Sept. 16 headline “Wolf Follows Through on Promise to Curtail Spending, Freezes $1.2 Billion in Medicaid Funds” was the last straw for me. The inability of our state representatives and governor to work together to fulfill their obligations to the people they represent is... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

Clean water advocates fighting state House GOP revenue proposal
As the state budget impasse courses on, clean water advocates are urging the Senate to vote against the latest House revenue proposal. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation emailed a “call to action” to its supporters Monday, Sept. 18, asking them to contact their state senator and urge him... - *York Dispatch*

September 19
Local lawmakers take different views on spending agenda
Some local legislators are unsatisfied with at least one – or even both – of the current options available to close a $2.2 billion gap between income and expenses in Pennsylvania’s budget. State Rep. Carl Walker Metzgar, R-Berlin, opposed the $32 billion spending... - *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*

Your view: Pashinski wrong about budget proposal
State Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski in “Robbing agricultural funds no way to balance the budget,” criticizes the Republican state budget proposal despite its efforts to protect taxpayers and the agricultural programs he strongly supports. The budget proposal redirects money from unassigned, growing savings... - *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*
"Engagement" is the theme of the day for Pa. budget talks, as pillars of agreement take shape
Welcome to the stretch run! (And, apologies if you've read that here before.) But just as the state of Pennsylvania has started delaying payments to some creditors, it appears all sets of legislative leaders are ready for what they hope are close-out talks with Gov. Tom Wolf on a $2.2 billion revenue... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

The money’s right here! In Pa. budget battle, House GOP says answer is in unspent accounts
The Pennsylvania House Republican caucus says idle funds from more than 30 government accounts could balance last year’s and this year’s budgets. Pennsylvania’s $32 billion budget passed earlier this year but without a revenue package and a structural deficit of more than $2 billion. There... - *York Daily*

'I can make this work.'
A new week in Harrisburg, a new budget deadline. Gov. Wolf on Tuesday said he can stave off any major harm from the state’s unfinished budget until Oct. 1. In an interview with Pittsburgh radio station KQV, the Democratic governor said that if legislators can find a compromise and approve it by that time,... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

Revenue fight looms as Pennsylvania Senate reconvenes
Pressure intensified Tuesday for Pennsylvania’s lawmakers to strike a bipartisan budget deal. More than two months after the 2017-18 budget became law without Gov. Tom Wolf’s signature, the Legislature has yet to resolve how to come up with $2.2 billion more needed to fully fund the $32 billion spending plan.... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

Editorial: State leaders need to face reality on budget
The Issue: The spending plan in Harrisburg remains unfunded more than two months into the fiscal year. Our Opinion: Lawmakers need to raise taxes, cut expenditures, or both, and do it honestly this time. It’s getting hard to say whether bipartisanship in Harrisburg yields... - *Reading Eagle*

Metzgar, Stefano support no-new-taxes fiscal code
State lawmakers are still debating how to pay for the $32 billion spending package they approved in June. Last week the House sent a no-new-taxes fiscal code to the Senate. - *Somerset Daily*

Eyes on Capitol as Senate considers House budget plan
HARRISBURG – Members of the state Senate returned to the Capitol Monday to decide whether to accept a House plan that rejected most of a plan approved by the Senate in August. It’s far from clear how quickly lawmakers will reach a compromise, so those who count on state funding are starting to make plans to cope if state... - *Sunbury Daily Item*
Gov. Tom Wolf says time running out on budget deal before more payments delayed
Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf says Pennsylvania state government has less than two weeks to end a budget stalemate before the state’s battered credit rating gets another downgrade and he must delay more payments for lack of cash... - AP

Editorial: Looking for answers in Harrisburg
Unlike most of us, some of our state legislators spent this long, languorous weekend enjoying the last days of their summer vacation. That’s right, our fine elected representatives of the Pennsylvania will head back to work at the state Capitol in Harrisburg today.... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

Elizabeth Steele | House budget solution spares taxpayers
Tired of hearing about the state budget impasse? There could finally be light at the end of the tunnel and, for taxpayers, it’s not an oncoming train. This past Wednesday, the state House passed a $2.3 billion revenue plan that could end the budget impasse that’s lingered since June 30. The... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

September 18
Pennsylvania Senate confronts no-tax package in 80-day budget fight
The Pennsylvania Senate is back in Harrisburg on day 80 of an increasingly ugly budget fight... - AP

Area legislators have mixed views on bill to suspend their pay during budget impasses
Local legislators have mixed opinions about a state House of Representatives bill that would suspend pay for lawmakers in the event of future budget impasses. Legislation introduced in June by Rep. Christopher Quinn, R-Edgmont, and referred to the House State Government Committee on Sept. 5 — House... - Waynesburg Greene County Messenger

Video gaming machines in Pa. bars? Not so fast
July is usually the busiest time of the year for sales from the to-go cooler at McStew’s Irish Pub in Levittown. In 2016, takeout sales accounted for $81,000 in revenue. In July 2017, it was $64,000. The state’s new law allowing six-packs to be sold in grocery stores and... - Philadelphia Inquirer

With Pennsylvania Starved For Cash, Senate Returns From Summer Break
With the state now unable to pay its bills, the Senate returns from summer break Monday to tackle a controversial no-tax revenue plan passed by the House last week... a revenue plan intended to fully fund the state budget that became law in July. With the revenue situation unresolved, the state treasurer said he would... - KYW News Radio 1060
Editorial: It’s budget business as usual in Harrisburg
Only in Pennsylvania. Yes, we have a budget in place, one calls for our friends in Harrisburg to spend $32 billion of your hard-earned tax dollars. It’s been in place since the state-mandated deadline of July 1. What we don’t have is a way to pay for it. Still, two and a half months later.... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

80 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than 11 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - Erie Times-News

Clearfield County Solid Waste Authority expresses concern about plan to fund state budget deficit
Clearfield County Solid Waste Authority members expressed concern over news of the state House’s plan to pay for a shortfall in Pennsylvania’s budget. Last week, the state House of Representatives approved a strategy to balance the state’s spending plan $2.2 billion deficit that included... - Clearfield Progress

State budget stalemate: The meter’s running
Pennsylvanians for the most part don’t expect much from their comfortably compensated lawmakers. But they do expect them to complete an annual budget before the commonwealth reaches deadbeat status. We warned Pennsylvanians to hold their applause at June’s end when... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Sen. Pat Toomey’s reluctance to address his protesters appears to be fueling a progressive wave
On Aug. 31 in Bethlehem, Pa., U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey finally held an in-person town hall. Only 54 constituents were granted tickets to attend, but unscreened questions were allowed. However, it didn’t really go the way constituents who oppose the Republican senator’s views might have... - Pittsburgh City Paper

Borough votes to help fix bridges
From Staff Reports Locally elected and appointed officials voted on the following matters in the past week: Federal • The House voted 211-198 to pass the Make America Secure and Prosperous Appropriations Act. It allocates funding for federal, state, and local law... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Issue a taxing one for retailers
To the average customer, not much has changed inside Vapor Expressions, a business specializing in vaping devices — commonly called electronic cigarettes. But a new tax on the devices has come into play, bringing millions of dollars in state revenue, while hurting the profits of vaping... - Altoona Mirror
September 17

**Pennsylvania's ugly budget fight gets personal and regional**
The feel-good bipartisan spirit that Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf tried to instill last year in Pennsylvania's Capitol is gone, stomped to bits in an increasingly ugly budget stalemate... - AP

**Uncertain state budget delaying Warner Theatre renovations**
The best things are worth waiting for,’ Casey Wells says about long-delayed theater project. The Warner Theatre’s long-planned multimillion-dollar renovation is delayed once again — this time because of an unsettled state budget — and as a result Erie Events has scrapped plans to close the historic... - *Erie Times-News*

**Yo, Harrisburg, snap out of it!**
I have a suggestion. Send your state House and/or Senate member a rubber band. Tell him or her to put it on his or her wrist and snap it. And keep snapping it. It's worth a try. If they do it long enough, maybe they’ll snap out of it. Don’t know your lawmakers? Google “PA General Assembly,” go to... - *Philadelphia Daily News*

**Our View: Diamonds for preserving a county gem**
Diamonds to Luzerne County Administrator C. David Pedri and staff for securing contract work for restoration of the county courthouse interior. Additional kudos for a contract that enforces a tight timeline by fining the contractor $250 for every day work exceeding a March 9 deadline. Yes,... - *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*

**Penn state tuition could go up 3 percent without more state money**
It costs a lot of money to send a kid to college. Eric Barron knows this. He is responsible for about 100,000 of them. But the Penn State president wants people to understand that the university, often pointed to as an example of out-of-control tuition since... - *State College Centre Daily Times*

**Pat Howard: Good government takes beating (again)**
Governing responsibly requires the Pennsylvania Legislature to cover budget outlays in credible and sustainable ways. Anything else is grandstanding. Argue about spending again next year. I miss adults. You know, the kind who wouldn’t take their ball and go home for weeks, leaving pressing matters unresolved and unattended.... - *Erie Times-News*

**Tied down with late budget, lawmakers warned to keep on ties**
After spending months in futile efforts to complete a budget, Pennsylvania legislators have turned their attention to what they should be wearing to the fight over state finances... - AP

**Pa.'s budget stalemate causes payment delays but no urgency visible at Capitol to address it**
Pennsylvania's incomplete 2017-18 budget is now starting to cause a pinch in the way the state conducts its business. It can no longer pay all of its bills on time. The state's top financial officers who are empowered to authorize stopgap loans won't do it any more... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*
Wolf says budget impasse forcing him to withhold nearly $1.2 billion in Medicaid payments
With the state’s cash running low, Gov. Wolf on Friday said he was forced to withhold nearly $1.2 billion in payments to Medicaid program providers. In a short statement, the governor said his administration will be unable for at least a week to make the payments to managed care organizations, the... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

79 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than 11 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - Erie Times-News

LETTER Ortitay, Turzai stand up for taxpayers
Gov. Tom Wolf has been steadfast in his desire to raise taxes on all Pennsylvanians. Since taking office, Wolf has tried to tax diapers, child care services, nursing home care, and many other items that are necessities for Pennsylvanians of all income levels. He has also pushed for an increase to... - Washington Observer-Reporter

Letters to the Editor 9/17/2017
Editor: In 2010 Steve Jobs unveiled the iPad. He concluded that the iPad was way better than a laptop, way better than a smartphone and advocated that everyone own one. Tech giants, though, refused to give their children iPads. They have seen the dangers of technology. It’s like the cardinal rule for drug dealing... - Scranton Times

Sunday pops
Lawmakers’ return to Harrisburg last week brought speculation about the gubernatorial run that House Speaker Mike Turzai, R-Marshall, told GOP officials he was seriously considering in May. The Associated Press reported that he and his “longtime campaign consultant” were mum,... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

In cash crush, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf postpones more than $1 billion in medical and pension payments
Most Pennsylvanians avoided the big budget hurt when the state ran out of money Friday to cover $2.5 billion in bills amid a months-long budget stalemate in the state Capitol. With the Legislature unable to pass tax and revenue bills to pay for the state budget since July, Gov. Tom Wolf announced the state temporarily... - Allentown Morning Call

78 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than 10 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - Erie Times-News
Withdrawal from 911, other funds axed from Pa. House revenue plan
The state revenue package that narrowly passed the House Wednesday night uses roughly half the amount of special fund transfers as were listed in the GOP’s original budget plan introduced last week. The change follows criticism throughout the week from state agencies and... - Carlisle Sentinel

September 15
Wolf says budget impasse forcing him to withhold nearly $1.2 billion in Medicaid payments
HARRISBURG — With the state still mired in a stubborn budget impasse, Gov. Tom Wolf on Friday said he is being forced to withhold nearly $1.2 billion in payments to Medicaid program providers across the state. In a short statement, the governor said his administration will be unable... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pa. budget debacle: How we got here and what’s next
Today was the last day Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf says his administration has enough cash to pay bills on time until spring, The Associated Press reports from Harrisburg. At issue is lawmakers and the governor started Fiscal Year 2018 on July 1 without balancing the $32 billion budget approved by the Legislature. Wolf... - Easton Express-Times

Laughlin pledges to continue fight for Erie schools
State Senate to reconvene on Monday to consider House proposal that eliminated long-term funding boost for Erie School District. Dan Laughlin is ready to return to Harrisburg to press for more funding for the Erie School District. The Republican state senator from Millcreek Township, who was instrumental... - Erie Times-News

Delco legislators split mostly along party lines on Pa. budget fix
Staring at a budget deadline that could see the state running out of money, the state House approved a spending plan Wednesday night. But it did nothing to bridge the partisan divide in the state Capitol. State Rep. Alex Charlton, R-165 of Springfield, was the only county... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

Overdue dissection could produce state budget solution
We have lost track of how many times we have asked in this space that the state budget be examined line item by line item before its size and the taxes needed to support it are increased. Faced with a $2.2 billion budget gap for the belated 2017-18 budget, the... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Pennsylvania on edge of missing payments in budget stalemate
HARRISBURG, Pa. — The state government appeared on the edge, for the first known time, of missing a payment as a result of not having enough cash on hand amid a feud over how to patch a $2.2 billion budget gap... - AP
Republican State House Representative applaud budget package
Local Republican lawmakers are lauding the Wednesday night passage of the House’s $31.9 billion spending plan, saying the bill will completely fund the state with no tax increases. In a joint statement, Reps. Ryan Warner, R-Perryopolis, and Matt Dowling, R-Uniontown, said the vote was an important step in a responsible solution... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

State budget proposal may have local impact
A recent solution to fill the state budget’s deficit has passed the House with 103 votes in favor and 91 votes against, and is now on its way to the Senate. This solution does not raise state taxes, and it doesn’t require a loan to incur further state debt, but it has caused concern for... - Waynesboro Record Herald

Berks County schools anxiously await state spending plan
It’s not dark yet, but it’s getting there. The state has passed the two-month mark without a way to fund the 2017-18 budget and the impacts of the delay are starting to show. Notably, public school districts are unsure when they’ll get state funding they’re due.... - Reading Eagle

Clean up your own budget mess, lawmakers. Pennsylvanians don’t need another tax hike
For almost three decades, Citizens Against Higher Taxes has been fighting on behalf of hard-working Pennsylvanians taxpayers. Our goal has been to allow taxpayers to keep more of their money and to decide for themselves how it’s spent. We believe that when wage-earners are empowered to make those decisions... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Dress code quibble in the state House shows misplaced priorities
For those who are keeping score of such things, today is Sept. 15 or 77 days since the fiscal year began on July 1. Why is that significant? Mainly because our state legislature in Harrisburg has yet to figure out how to pay for a spending plan it passed not quite... - Lewistown Sentinel

Berks County lawmakers share views on House revenue plan
How they voted This is how state House members representing Berks County voted on the House budget plan. Yes Jim Cox, Spring Township Republican Jerry P. Knowles, Schuylkill County Republican David M. Maloney Sr., Pike Township Republican Barry Jozwiak, Bern Township Republican... - Reading Eagle

Local House Republicans back revenue plan; Rep. Rob Matzie calls it ‘worse than usual’
A state House Republican revenue package that calls for borrowing $1 billion and shifting money from existing accounts to close a budget shortfall drew support from the three local Republican lawmakers when it passed Wednesday night, but the lone Democrat voted against it.... - Beaver County Times
State’s funds hit $0, with no revenue plan
Today marks a major deadline for Pennsylvania’s ongoing budget impasse: the state’s General Fund now has a balance of zero, according to Treasurer Joe Torsella. Torsella, in conjunction with Auditor General Eugene DePasquale, has been warning state lawmakers about this deadline for months. - *Titusville Herald*

September 14
State House passes $2.2 billion special funds transfers and borrowing plan to fill Pennsylvania budget hole
The Pennsylvania House has passed a $2.2 billion revenue plan that should, at the least, serve as a re-set for budget negotiations that have been stalled through most of the summer. The bill is the majority House Republicans’ belated, no-new-taxes answer to a Senate plan passed with the endorsement of Gov. Tom Wolf in July that... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

House approves plan to balance Pa. budget without tax increases
The state House voted 103-91 late Wednesday night to approve a plan to balance the state budget by shifting funds and using a variety of other one-time moves to generate more than $2 billion without raising taxes. The plan takes less from special funds than a plan unveiled by House... - *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*

Pennsylvania House GOP OKs borrowing, no-new-taxes plan to plug deficit
HARRISBURG — Up against an unprecedented cash crunch, Republicans who control Pennsylvania’s House of Representatives late Wednesday night approved a no-new-taxes borrowing package to help plug the state government’s $2.2 billion budget gap... - *AP*

Gov. Tom Wolf, General Assembly violating state’s balanced budget requirement: lawsuit
Saying Gov. Tom Wolf and the General Assembly have been violating the state constitution for the past two years by enacting unbalanced budgets, a trio of Pennsylvanians have decided the time is right to ask the court to put a stop to it. A lobbyist, a businessman and a lawmaker are expected to file a lawsuit on... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

Should Pa. lawmakers get a paycheck when there’s no balanced budget?
Pennsylvania is in the middle of its third month without a budget. The fiscal 2017-18 year began July 1, and since then state lawmakers have debated how to close the gap between money spent and money received. The Republican-controlled Legislature passed a spending plan, and... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

Pennsylvania budget limbo has ‘everybody on edge’: 5 things to know today
"Everybody is on edge," Jay Himes, executive director of the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials, told me by phone from Harrisburg this morning. More than two months after
the 2017-18 state budget became law without Gov. Tom Wolf's signature, the Legislature has yet to resolve how to come up... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

**Controversy swirls around fracking ban proposal for Delaware River watershed**
Environmental organizations have spent the better part of a decade calling for a ban on the use of a drilling technique called hydraulic fracturing — commonly known as fracking — to extract natural gas out of the Delaware River basin. But when such a proposal was put forth Wednesday morning, those same groups... - Levittown Intelligencer

**Pa. House Sends Senate Hotly Contested Revenue Plan**
Voting mostly along party lines, the state House has passed a controversial, Republican-crafted revenue plan to pay for Pennsylvania's already-enacted budget without significant tax increases. The revenue plan involves the use of what supporters like Republican Dan... - KYW News Radio 1060

**Pa. House passes budget plan that Gov. Wolf calls 'irresponsible'**
HARRISBURG — With Pennsylvania facing a looming cash crunch, the state House of Representatives worked late into the night Wednesday to pass its gambit to end a months-long budget impasse. But Gov. Tom Wolf called the revenue plan “irresponsible,” and signaled that it won’t offset the need for him to make difficult cuts... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**State House approves plan to balance budget without tax increases**
HARRISBURG — The state House voted 103-91 late Wednesday night to approve a plan to balance the state budget by shifting funds and using a variety of other one-time moves to generate more than $2 billion without raising taxes. The plan takes less from special funds than a plan unveiled by House... - Meadville Tribune

**Pennsylvania lacks money to pay bills due Friday, officials warn**
Pennsylvania may go broke Friday for the first time in its history. The state won’t have enough money to cover $860 million in scheduled payroll, bond and Medicaid bills, and neither Treasurer Joe Torsella nor Auditor General Eugene DePasquale is interested in authorizing another... - Allentown Morning Call

**Public transit reserve funds are a sensible way to fill the Pa. budget gap**
Talk of service cuts from the Port Authority in “Port Authority Urges Pa. Legislators to Spare Public Transit From Funding Cuts” (Sept. 12) is mistaken at best and disingenuous fearmongering at worst. The recent state House proposal to shift $357 million from the $478 million... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**Tied down with late budget, Pennsylvania lawmakers warned to keep on neckties**
After spending months in futile efforts to complete a budget, Pennsylvania legislators have turned their attention to what they should be wearing to the fight over state finances... - AP
State GOP plan keeps Erie schools money
But budget proposal, which faces opposition, eliminates long-term funding boost. A narrow vote Wednesday night in the state House of Representatives provided the Erie School District with more certainty that it will get $14 million in additional state funding this fiscal year.... - Erie Times-News

New Pennsylvania budget lawsuit is a long overdue warning shot | John L. Micek
The only thing that’s strange about activist Matt Brouillette’s legal fight to get the state to live within its fiscal means is that it didn’t happen sooner. Because it’s not a toughie: You can’t spend what you don’t have. And you can’t spend more than you have.... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Local lawmakers are in agreement
Local lawmakers made it clear this week they are on board to plug a revenue gap in the budget by drawing down excess fund balances from programs rather than raising taxes or borrowing. Despite outcry from officials and beneficiaries of those programs, state Rep. Garth Everett, R-Muncy, said he feels it’s simply the best choice.... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

How the House would raise $2.2 billion to balance the budget
The revenue package that passed the House on Wednesday by a 103-91 vote is projected to raise $2.2 billion and do it without a tax increase. Instead, this alternative to a Senate-passed tax and borrowing revenue package relies heavily on a different kind of borrowing scheme and dipping... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Let court decide if Pa. officials broke the law with an unbalanced budget
In the 1993 film The Firm, a young lawyer played by Tom Cruise famously asks his legal mentor how far he wants the law bent. “As far as you can without breaking it,” is the cynical reply. When it comes to Pennsylvania’s constitutional requirement for a balanced budget, our elected officials have taken this ethically challenged.... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Top Pennsylvania senator vows action in state’s cash crunch
The Pennsylvania Senate’s Republican majority leader is pledging fast action following the House’s passage of a plan to help plug state government’s $2.2 billion budget gap almost three months into the fiscal year... - AP

September 13
Pennsylvania lacks money to pay bills due Friday, officials warn
Pennsylvania may go broke Friday for the first time in its history. The state won’t have enough money to cover $860 million in scheduled payroll, bond and Medicaid bills, and neither Treasurer Joe Torsella nor Auditor General Eugene DePasquale is interested in authorizing another... - Allentown Morning Call

House Republicans muscle through a revenue plan based largely on one-time fixes; could be reset for broader state budget negotiations
Pennsylvania’s state’ budget negotiations may be nearing a reset point now that the House has
formulated a $2.3 billion revenue package intended to plug a hole in the state's $32 billion general fund. The plan, as unveiled at a House Rules Committee meeting Wednesday where it... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Budget deadlock drags on as Erie schools wait
State House leadership adjourned on Tuesday without voting on revenue measures. The Erie School District remains stuck in fiscal uncertainty after the state House of Representatives extended Pennsylvania's 3-month-old budget stalemate on Tuesday. The House failed to vote on budget measures, including a GOP faction’s... - Erie Times-News

As budget battle brews, there's a new fight to raise Pa's minimum wage
Good Wednesday Morning, Fellow Seekers. With lawmakers scrambling to find the cash to close a $2.2 billion deficit and pay for the 2017-18 state budget, advocates of a higher minimum wage are hoping that this might be their moment. Backers say the state could raise hundreds of millions of dollars in new... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Lobbyists' cozy relationship with Pa. pols often trumps public good
One of the more twisted reasons why Pennsylvania can’t fund its state budget is that the Republican majority is swaying to and fro under the influence of two lobbying firms. The lobbyists not only shower legislators with campaign money to gain favor, but they have upped the game by also running the lawmakers’... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Bad bus deja vu: Port Authority cuts from state? Not this again
The 1993 film “Groundhog Day” was turned into a critically acclaimed musical this year. People are drawn to the fantasy story about being trapped in an endless loop of absurd circumstances. The show closed early on Broadway, but some Republicans in Harrisburg appear to be working... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pennsylvania House Republicans regroup around no-new-tax package to plug deficit
Up against an unprecedented cash crunch, Republicans who control Pennsylvania’s House of Representatives are preparing to vote on a no-new-taxes revenue package to help plug state government’s $2.2 billion budget gap... - AP

Pa. lawmakers may have to work overtime on budget-funding plan
HARRISBURG — The pressure is on. Gov. Tom Wolf has said that by the end of this week, he will have to make steep cuts to the $32 billion budget the Republican-controlled Legislature passed in June unless the House of Representatives moves on a proposal to fund it.... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

PA House Vote On No-Tax Revenue Plan On Hold
An anticipated vote on a no-tax plan to pay for Pennsylvania’s budget plan was a no go in the state House Tuesday. A group of House Republican members informally known as the “Taxpayer Caucus” propose to use what they say are surpluses in special funds. A Tuesday vote was planned. But Republican Dave Reed, the House majority... - KYW News Radio 1060
Pennsylvania House GOP hits wall on budget-balancing plan
HARRISBURG — Stymied by dissension among Republicans, Pennsylvania’s House of Representatives put off preliminary votes Tuesday on measures designed to plug the state government’s $2.2 billion budget gap with money siphoned partly from public transportation and environmental improvement...

September 12
Area legislators have mixed views on bill to suspend their pay during budget impasses
Local legislators have mixed opinions about a state House of Representatives bill that would suspend pay for lawmakers in the event of future budget impasses. Thank you for Reading! Please log in, or sign up for a new account and purchase a subscription to continue reading.... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

House returns, Pa. budget impasse goes on
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania’s House of Representatives returned to the Capitol on Monday for its first session in seven weeks, but a divided Republican majority argued over a new budget-balancing plan and provided no sign that a more-than-two-month budget stalemate will end any time soon.../...

Pa’s budget stalemate is just getting more stale
Stop-gap measures to fund Pennsylvania’s budget-bereft government operations - both those already employed by the Wolf administration and those proposed by a group of legislators - are no remedy for the commonwealth’s chronic and systemic budget woes, say scholars at the...

House GOP spending plan worries 2 state secretaries, transit director
Opposition is getting louder against a House Republican proposal to use money supporters say is sitting dormant in state accounts to pay for the overdue state budget funding plan. Leaders of two state agencies and Berks and Lancaster counties’ transit agencies have expressed concerns, with the agency leaders writing letters...

Pennsylvania House to vote on bill to plug $2.4 billion deficit with other money
The Pennsylvania House is scheduled to vote Tuesday on a controversial bill to plug the state’s $2.4 billion budget deficit with mass transit, farming and environmental money instead of higher taxes and bonds. The bill’s passage, however, is uncertain. The House’s Republican leadership decided to dial up the vote following...

Alloway warns lawmakers: Leave transportation money alone
HARRISBURG -- Sen. Richard Alloway II, R-Chambersburg, has cautioned GOP House members that the legislature previously promised taxpayers that transportation fees would be spent on transportation. A group of conservative Republicans in the House have proposed balancing...

Penn Live, Patriot-News
Reading Eagle
Allentown Morning Call
Chambersburg Public Opinion
Pennsylvania House GOP delays vote on budget-balancing plan
Pennsylvania's House of Representatives is putting off preliminary votes on measures designed to plug state government's $2.2 billion budget gap with money siphoned partly from public transportation and environmental improvement programs... - AP

State House picks up budget talks
HARRISBURG — The state House returned to the Capitol on Monday to begin debating how to close a $2.2 billion shortfall in the state’s spending plan. There was little public movement though House Republican spokesman Stephen Miskin said a budget vote could come as soon as Tuesday. Lawmakers spent... - New Castle News

Pennsylvania House GOP budget plan cuts $27 million from farmland preservation fund
The 80-plus Lehigh County farms vying to sell conservation easements through a state- and county-funded program aimed at preserving Pennsylvania farmland may have to wait even longer to sign on the dotted lines. The Pennsylvania House Republican Caucus called for a one-time transfer of... - Allentown Morning Call

State budget talks reopen at Pennsylvania Capitol, after a summer pause
The state House of Representatives returned to Harrisburg Monday to “figure out what it’s for” regarding the unfinished state budget. Lawmakers and Gov. Tom Wolf need to find $2.2 billion to balance the $32.0 billion spending plan passed in late June for fiscal 2017-18.... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Christiana says severance tax would be ‘horrendous public policy,’ should be pulled from revenue bill
State Rep. Jim Christiana on Monday called for the proposed severance tax on natural gas drilling to be pulled from a budget revenue bill, saying it would be “horrendous public policy” that could threaten the petrochemical industry’s future in Pennsylvania. “There are plenty of other ways to solve this budget impasse,” said... - Beaver County Times

September 11
State Budget: Wrangling over revenue
When the Pennsylvania House of Representatives re-convenes this week, all indications are that it will not pass the existing revenue bill — brokered in July in the Senate — as it stands. Rather, the House will be looking to pass a no-new-taxes package that relies on pulling revenue from existing funds that have displayed... - Carlisle Sentinel

Is Pa.’s state House Speaker running for governor or not?
Good Monday Morning, Fellow Seekers. It wasn't so long ago that Pennsylvania state House Speaker Mike Turzai was looking like a serious contender for governor in 2018. The Allegheny County Republican was making all the right noises; he’d staffed up, and he was starting to sound like an actual candidate.... - Penn Live, Patriot-News
Port Authority urges Pa. legislators to spare public transit from funding cuts
Port Authority would have to consider reducing weekday service hours by 20 percent, eliminating half of its 98 routes or stopping all weekend service if a state budget proposal to cut its funding by $80 million is adopted. In a letter to legislators released Monday, acting CEO David Donahoe said... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

House GOP spending plan worries 2 state secretaries, transit director
Opposition is getting louder against a House Republican proposal to use money supporters say is sitting dormant in state accounts to pay for the overdue state budget funding plan. Leaders of two state agencies and Berks and Lancaster counties' transit agencies have expressed concerns, with the agency leaders writing letters... - *Reading Eagle*

A conversation with state Rep. Barry Jozwiak
Editor’s note: This is part of an occasional series designed to help readers better know local elected officials. From his tidy 5th Legislative District office at Reading Regional Airport, state Rep. Barry Jozwiak spoke with the Reading Eagle on Thursday about the... - *Reading Eagle*

Latest GOP Revenue Proposal On Agenda As PA House Returns
As the Pennsylvania House returns from its summer break Monday, House majority Republicans are expected to huddle and discuss a controversial plan to fund the state budget without major tax hikes or borrowing. The revenue proposal involves tapping special funds that are not in the... - *KYW News Radio 1060*

Uncertainty still clouding state budget
Pennsylvania’s House of Representatives returns to work Monday with a 2017-18 budget-funding plan, but it’s a proposal not without serious questions, the most important of which is whether there’s any chance that the Senate will concur. The Senate has had its own plan on the table for weeks, and the competing... - *Altoona Mirror*

Pennsylvania House returns, with fight over $2.2B unresolved
Members of Pennsylvania’s House of Representatives are back in the Capitol for their first session in seven weeks as a two-month budget stalemate shows no signs of ending... - *AP*

With winter coming for Pa., a budget only a 'Game of Thrones' fan could appreciate | John L. Micek
If you’re looking for some idea of just how weird things have gotten in the debate over Pennsylvania’s still unfinished state budget, it was on full display in the Capitol rotunda on Monday morning. Because that’s where you’d have found Jeff Garis, spokesman for the... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*
Transportation officials wary of plan
A plan by a group of Republican lawmakers to close the state budget gap has led transportation officials to warn of major service cuts if it passes — including the possible end of the only passenger rail service through Altoona. A plan by a group of Republican lawmakers to close the state budget gap has... - **Altoona Mirror**

Officials: Transfers in state budget proposal would be devastating
A recently unveiled budget proposal from members of the state House Republicans would cause some serious consequences in the region, state officials say. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation said a 35-percent reduction in operating subsidies would come with a $357 million withdrawal from the... - **Bradford Era**

September 10
71 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than nine weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - **Erie Times-News**

72 days without a complete state budget
The state Legislature is more than 10 weeks past its constitutional deadline to pass a complete 2017-18 budget. Lawmakers in late June approved a $32 billion spending plan but no revenue package to balance it. The Senate on July 27 passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that is meant... - **Erie Times-News**

Erie schools funding at risk in budget twist
House GOP group’s budget proposal would eliminate $14 million included in spending package passed June 30. Talks expected to resume in Harrisburg on Monday. As the General Assembly reconvenes on Monday, the Erie School District will be among those groups focused on the outcome of the long-delayed state... - **Erie Times-News**

Pennsylvania budget proposal is no miracle
When an Allentown Fair barker tells you that for $2 you will get to see a voluptuous headless centerfold model kept alive through a miracle of medical science, you’re probably going to be somewhat skeptical. That’s not to say you won’t pay the $2 to see for yourself, at least if... - **Allentown Morning Call**

Editorial: State needs an honestly balanced budget
The response of Gov. Tom Wolf’s office to a no-tax-increase revenue plan offered Tuesday by a group of conservative House Republicans was interesting if not entirely enlightening. - **Reading Eagle**

Pa. House to weigh GOP plan for budget
The Pennsylvania House of Representatives will return to session Monday for the first time in
seven weeks as a lengthening budget stalemate is drawing warnings by Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf that he is out of options to make payments on time... - AP

**Lawmakers talk state budget, taxes, cracker plant at Airport Area chamber breakfast**

Lawmakers talk state budget, taxes, cracker plant at Airport Area chamber breakfast - Beaver County Times

**GOP budget stopgap would hurt county farms**

Lancaster County leads the nation in farmland preservation with more than 100,000 acres of farmland permanently protected. For 30 years, our community has embraced county, state and private efforts to preserve the most productive agricultural land in the country. Our success would not be... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

**Sounding off: Seniors can’t take tax hikes**

Regarding the news story “Sen. Casey holds roundtable talk in Jeannette,” Mary Ann Mogus’ letter “Libraries are not obsolete,” Cesare Muccari’s letter “Not obsolete in Westmoreland” and Pennsylvania’s cycle of taxation: Will it never end? No one wants to talk about spending reductions; they only see increasing... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

**Raiding preservation funding is not a solution to state budget deficit**

Our state budget, passed in June and not funded by the Legislature, has caused severe heart palpitations for the Lancaster County Conservancy, local municipal governments, Lancaster Farmland Trust and other local organizations. The House Republican proposal, introduced earlier this week,... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

**A Pennsylvania guide to budget prattle**

Late budgets have become a hallmark of the Tom Wolf administration as the governor habitually proposes spending that vastly exceeds available projected revenue. The governor and legislators are in somewhat uncharted waters as they approved a spending plan by the budget deadline, but have yet to reach... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

**State reps, local business leaders condemn revenue bill during Taxpayers’ Caucus hearing**

Seven Pennsylvania state representatives and several local and regional business representatives gathered to denounce a revenue bill that passed the state Senate in July during a House Taxpayers’ Caucus hearing at the Park Inn by Radisson on Thursday. Thank you for Reading!... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

**Pa. legislators return Monday with budget crisis looming**

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives will return to session Monday for the first time in seven weeks as a lengthening budget stalemate is drawing warnings by Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf that he is out of options to make payments on time... - AP

**Pashinski: Robbing agriculture funds no way to balance budget**

Following the release of the House Republicans’ plan to fill a $2.2 billion budget gap with fund transfers, state Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski said Friday that taking millions of dollars from
agriculture and other programs is not the solution. Pashinski, D-Wilkes-Barre and Democratic chairman of the House Agriculture... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

September 8

Time to budge: Zero hour for state budget is near: Get cracking
Four days and four nights.” That, state Treasurer Joe Torsella pointed out, is how much time the Legislature will have to pass a revenue package next week before the state runs short of money to cover all of its bills. The House returns to session Sept. 11, and the cash crunch is due to begin... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

State reps, local business leaders condemn revenue bill during Taxpayers’ Caucus hearing
NORTH UNION TWP. — Seven Pennsylvania state representatives and several local and regional business representatives gathered to denounce a revenue bill that passed the state Senate in July during a House Taxpayers’ Caucus hearing at the Park Inn by Radisson on Thursday.... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

GOP watches for House speaker to decide on run for governor | Pennsylvania
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Pennsylvania House Speaker Mike Turzai’s plan to run for governor is gathering dust while he’s embroiled in an increasingly ugly budget stalemate that shows no signs of ending... - AP

Port Authority could lose $80 million in state funds if House GOP plan prevails
The yearly possibility of service cuts to Port Authority as a result of state funding shortfalls was supposed to be eliminated for at least a decade when the Legislature passed a transportation funding bill in 2013. But the agency — and transit systems across the state — would face... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

GOP lawmaker says state income tax increase is inevitable
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A Republican state lawmaker from suburban Philadelphia says an income tax increase is inevitable to fix the state’s deficit-riddled finances, even if it doesn’t happen this year... - AP

Republican lawmaker proposes income tax increase to solve Pennsylvania’s budget puzzle
As Pennsylvania’s budget “un-crisis” continues to slowly unfold in Harrisburg, a Bucks County lawmaker Thursday put his name behind a solution that, to date, there has been something of a gentleman’s agreement to avoid. Rep. Eugene DiGirolamo called for an increase in the state’s personal... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

September 7

Bethlehem wants Sands casino to pony up host fee
Bethlehem’s mayor is again asking the Sands casino to keeping paying its casino host fee
despite its legislative limbo to avoid impeding the city's financial progress. Many Pennsylvania casinos have stepped up and agreed to keep paying their slots revenue host fee -- about $8.8 million for Bethlehem -- while... - *Easton Express-Times*

**Gubernatorial candidates have differing views about the "Taxpayers' Budget"**

The rank-and-file House Republicans’ plan for closing the state’s $2.2 billion revenue hole in the 2017-18 budget is drawing diverse reactions from the three declared candidates running for governor next year. The so-called "Taxpayers' Budget" unveiled on Tuesday would sweep more than... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**State’s workers behind region**

The recovery from the Great Recession is in its ninth year and gradually accelerating, with economic growth reaching 3 percent in the second quarter and national unemployment well below 5 percent. Progress for most workers in Pennsylvania has been much slower than for... - *Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice*

**There has to be a better way to fund a budget than raiding rainy day funds**

THE ISSUE House Republicans in the state Capitol have revealed a plan to pull more than $2.4 billion from various government agency reserve funds and other accounts to fill the state’s budget deficit, LNP reported Wednesday. The plan would include one-time transfers such as $100 million from the... - *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*

**Is the budget pain coming for Pennsylvanians?**

Ho-hum. Another year, another state budget crisis over how to pay for rising government costs amid falling tax revenue and a perpetual $2.2 billion deficit. For the second time in three years, the majority House Republican Caucus finds itself at odds with Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf and a bipartisan group... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**Legalize marijuana in Pa. to boost revenues and create jobs**

With Pennsylvania teetering on the edge of another budget cliff, it is immensely clear to me that we must get creative in finding long-term revenue solutions to prevent total financial collapse. Last month, as a short-term fix to the state’s cash-flow woes, I... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**Wolf says House GOP’s budget-balancing plan is ‘nonsense’**

HARRISBURG — Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf says a plan assembled by a group of House Republicans to balance Pennsylvania’s budget is “nonsense” and urged House members to approve a $2.2 billion bipartisan plan that passed the state Senate in July... - *AP*

**State budget turmoil delaying PASSHE study**

A study of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education commissioned by the state legislature is waiting on the money to pay for it. The officers of the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) held a telephone conference Aug. 31 and made a qualified decision to hire the Rand... - *Clarion News*
Paying for a late state spending plan
Nobody’s ringing any alarm bells yet, but the state Legislature’s prolonged impasse on funding Pennsylvania’s $32 billion budget could impact mandated social services in the months to come, some officials say. That’s what happened two years ago when stalled talks forced some local social service... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

A severance tax won’t cure the state’s budget woes
Pennsylvania legislators looking to impose higher taxes on shale gas extraction under the guise of substantively closing the commonwealth’s multibillion-dollar budget shortfall should look elsewhere, say researchers at the Allegheny Institute for Public Policy.... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Spreading insolvency isn’t a budget
House Republicans who have mismanaged the state’s finances while in the majority for the last seven years have decided to balance the state budget by imposing insolvency on elements of the state government that are well-managed. In the process, of course, their plan manages to serve favored narrow... - Scranton Times

SEPTA warns state GOP budget proposal could gut public transit
A budget proposal from state Republicans would be catastrophic for public transportation in Philadelphia and surrounding counties, SEPTA officials warned Wednesday. The proposal unveiled Tuesday by a group of Pennsylvania House Republicans would force SEPTA to cut service by 40 percent and raise fares by 20... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Pennsylvania Auditor General says it’s time to legalize marijuana
Pennsylvania auditor general Eugene DePasquale believes legalizing and regulating recreational marijuana could be an antidote to the state’s budget woes. “The longer we wait, the more other states are going to beat us to the punch,” he told the Tribune-Review on Thursday. “I know it will... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

September 6
House GOP group wants to tap $2.4 billion in special reserve funds to fill state budget gap
House Republicans in the state Capitol have revealed a plan to pull more than $2.4 billion from various government agency reserve funds and other accounts to fill the state’s budget deficit. “Until and unless every source of reserve revenue is exhausted, we should not, and are not, asking more of our taxpayers,” Rep. Dan Moul,... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

Pennsylvania officials react to end of ‘Dreamers’ program
At first blush, Pennsylvania's elected officials offer typically partisan responses on President Donald Trump’s plan to end the program that allows young undocumented immigrants to live in
America. Republicans generally supported Trump's move to end the Deferred Action for...

Balancing Pa. budget without tax hikes? GOP House members pitch plan
Republican members of the Pennsylvania House said Tuesday they found a solution for the state’s budget shortfall that won’t require raising taxes. A group of 18 rank-and-file GOP lawmakers in the House announced the alternative to the Senate revenue package that raises a variety of taxes,... - Easton Express-Times

State House Republicans push new plan to balance budget
A group of state House Republicans on Tuesday introduced a new plan to solve Pennsylvania’s budget showdown: spend money the state already has. The plan quickly received push back from Gov. Tom Wolf’s office. A team of House members have worked for seven weeks to find an alternative... - Reading Eagle

Pitt, PSU leaders: The House needs to step up and pass our funding bills
On Saturday, more than 100,000 fans dressed in telling shades of blue, gold and white will fill Beaver Stadium to watch Pitt and Penn State football teams take the field. This tradition, which has simmered for more than a century, is fueled by intense competition and equally intense emotions. It is a game where... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

House Republicans advocate smashing piggy banks to solve Pa's budget crunch
A group of fiscally conservative state House members went public Tuesday with their way to close the state's $2.2 billion budget hole. Like those before it, it calls for trade-offs. But the 18 backers of this rank-and-file driven plan said it's a better trade than anything they’ve... - Penn Live, Patriot-News

Ahead of Penn State-Pitt Game, University Leaders Team Up to Tout Impact
Penn State and Pitt will face off at Beaver Stadium on Saturday, a once storied rivalry that’s been renewed, albeit briefly, with some intensity. As fans well know, Pitt escaped with a 42-39 win last year, and the No. 4 Nittany Lions will be looking for revenge this year.... - State College News

LOWMAN S. HENRY: A Pennsylvania budget glossary
Pennsylvania lawmakers are scheduled to return to session on Sept. 11 to finish work on a state budget which was due at the end of June. Late budgets have become a hallmark of the Tom Wolf administration as the governor habitually proposes spending that vastly exceeds available... - Pottstown Mercury

Here’s a breakdown of “Taxpayers' Budget" and how it avoids a major tax increase or borrowing money
After spending more than six weeks kicking over stones to find existing money to fully balance the enacted $32 billion state budget, a group of rank-and-file Central Pennsylvania Republican
lawmakers came up with a plan to accomplish that without raising a major tax or borrowing money.... - *Penn Live, Patriot-News*

**Area school districts not feeling state budget strain — yet**
School districts across the four-county region aren’t feeling the strain of the state budget impasse — at least for now. But Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials says that districts should expect to see no subsidy payments after Sept. 15 until the... - *Bradford Era*

**Pennsylvania House Republicans unveil budget plan with no tax hikes**
After more than a month of secretive budget work, House Republicans unveiled a plan Tuesday to fill the state’s $2.2 billion deficit without tax increases or going to a bank for a big bond. But critics say the fiscally conservative GOP lawmakers’ plan would hurt the people it is meant to protect by siphoning money from dozens of... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**House GOP proposes funding state budget with fund transfers**
A group of rank-and-file state House Republicans believe they have found more than $2.4 billion in existing funds to avoid adding any new taxes in their 2017-18 budget, more than two months overdue. The 18 House Republicans — including Reps. Dawn Keefer, Dillsburg; Seth... - *York Dispatch*

**Why House Republicans aren’t serious about Pa.’s budget deficit**
The games being played by House Republicans to avoid passing a budget that makes sense will work only if Pennsylvanians stop paying attention. Unfortunately, after three months of a stalemate more about politics than the state’s structural deficit, many already have.... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**Lawmakers pitch plan to tap ‘shadow budget’ to balance state books**
HARRISBURG — A group of conservative lawmakers unveiled a plan Tuesday to tap excess money in 41 special state funds along with a handful of other budget shifts to generate $2.4 billion to help balance the state budget. Their move targets what conservatives have described as the state’s... - *Sunbury Daily Item*

**September 5**

**Gov. Wolf warns of painful cuts if budget isn’t funded**
HARRISBURG – With the budget impasse now in its third month, Gov. Tom Wolf on Tuesday warned that he will have to make painful cuts in the state’s $32 billion budget at the end of next week, and that funding for roads, schools and other essential services may be the ones on the... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Gov. Wolf: ‘Pennsylvanians are going to get hurt’**
HARRISBURG – With the budget impasse now in its third month, Gov. Wolf on Tuesday warned that he will have to make painful cuts in the state’s $32 billion budget at the end of next week,
and that funding for roads, schools and other essential services may be the ones on the chopping block.... - Philadelphia Inquirer

**It's time to change Pa.'s budget process**
Is anyone getting tired of the Pennsylvania Legislature’s old, broken method of adopting budgets? We bet most Pennsylvanians are frustrated over how their elected representatives in Harrisburg go about making critical decisions on spending taxpayers’ money. The new fiscal years come and go, and rarely as of late have budgets been... - Lock Haven Express

**Video gaming terminals (VGTs)**
The good news is that Harrisburg passed a budget. The bad news is that they still have no way to pay for it. In fact, they are billions of dollars short. Some options to raise the necessary funds are to implement a tax on every drink purchased at bars and restaurants, increase the state income tax,... - Lock Haven Express

**Potter Co. commissioners discuss state budget**
COUDERSPORT — At Thursday’s meeting, Potter County commissioners reported on a recent open forum with state Rep. Martin Causer, R-Turtlepoint, and local business leaders. Commissioner Paul Heimel reported that much of the discussion revolved around the state budget and ongoing issues with funding the proposed... - Bradford Era

**Gas tax will deflate Pa.'s economy**
Pennsylvania state senators recently voted to raise taxes on natural gas as part of a $600 million tax on state job creators. Their budget proposal would slap a 5.7-percent tax on the fuel Pennsylvanians use to cook and heat their homes. It would also impose a $100 million annual “severance... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

**Shale tax, third-party permit reviews tucked into Pennsylvania budget bill**
Pennsylvania’s environmentalists and some in its natural gas industry are balking at legislation that calls for outsourcing environmental permitting and instituting a severance tax on shale gas production. The environmentalists worry it would weaken government oversight and boost... - Allentown Morning Call

**Lengthy Pa. budget battle could jeopardize local governments**
Stalled talks in Harrisburg over how to fund Pennsylvania’s $32 billion budget could have a trickle down affect later this year on local governments as they figure out how to pay for mandated social services. “I think we'll be OK for the immediate future, but if the Legislature... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

'**Pennsylvanians are going to get hurt.**'
With the budget impasse now in its third month, Gov. Wolf on Tuesday warned that he will have to make painful cuts in the state’s $32 billion budget at the end of next week, and that funding for roads, schools and other essential services may be the ones on the chopping block.... - Philadelphia Inquirer
A state budget glossary
Pennsylvania lawmakers are scheduled to return to session on Sept. 11 to finish work on a state budget which was due at the end of June. Late budgets have become a hallmark of the Tom Wolf administration as the governor habitually proposes spending that vastly exceeds available... - Indiana Gazette

Wolf: Pennsylvanians will 'get hurt' if budget isn't funded
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf is warning that Pennsylvanians will "get hurt" if state lawmakers don't pass a revenue package to balance a nearly $32 billion budget bill they approved more than two months ago... - AP

Time for House Republicans to act on budget
On June 30, working with Republicans and Democrats in the General Assembly, we passed a bipartisan, compromise budget that cut more than $2 billion in government waste and streamlined services for the people of Pennsylvania. We also invested more in our classrooms and directed greater resources to... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Potter Co. commissioners discuss state budget
COUDERSPORT — At Thursday’s meeting, Potter County commissioners reported on a recent open forum with state Rep. Martin Causer, R-Turtlepoint, and local business leaders. Commissioner Paul Heimel reported that much of the discussion revolved around the state budget and ongoing issues with funding the proposed... - Bradford Era

Walsh meets with constituents in Rostraver Township
ROSTRAVER TWP. — State Rep. Justin Walsh said one of his top priorities is to stimulate economic growth in the Mon Valley, particularly with energy development. Thank you for Reading! Please log in, or sign up for a new account and purchase a subscription to continue reading.... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

September 3
Editorial: Lawmakers fail to take responsibility on budget
The Issue: The state faces some forced spending cuts if a revenue plan is not approved before Sept. 15. Our Opinion: The House’s failure to find a way to pay for approved spending is a disgrace that cannot continue. The mess that is the Pennsylvania budget process just keeps getting worse.... - Reading Eagle

State House Republicans won’t accept tax hike
Despite a sharp letter Tuesday from Gov. Tom Wolf urging House Republicans to act on a plan to pay for state government operations, House members insist they won’t sign off on a tax
hike. State House Republicans insist they are working on their own plan. They say... - Reading Eagle

**Fortify fight against obesity**
The nation is mired in a political war over health care access and its cost, while failing to work hard enough on the most effective means to reduce costs and the very need for expensive care: prevention. Reducing obesity alone would go a long way to arresting health care costs.... - Scranton Times

**September 1**
**Pa. budget needs to be shaken up**
Two ideas — one from the right, one from the left — to fix Pennsylvania's budget woes just might (if put together) get state finances back on track. It'd take some doing and compromise. So right away you figure, eh, no chance. But what passes for fiscal management in Harrisburg is so astoundingly... - Philadelphia Inquirer

**David Mekeel: Saner timelines for Pa. budgeting**
I've written this column before. I don't remember when, exactly, but I know I have. Perhaps I've done it more than once. That's because the situation I'm lamenting hasn't changed a bit. And it probably won't anytime soon (so look forward to reading this again in 2025)... - Reading Eagle

**GOP majorities not showing results**
One-party rule has not worked out the way Republicans probably had hoped. This can't be what voters had in mind when they elected solid GOP majorities. Congress has two make-or-break items on its September calendar. It has to raise the nation's debt ceiling so it can pay for the things... - York Dispatch

**Change state budget process**
Another year, another state budget battle that pits extremists against each other without giving regular working folks a voice. Something has to change, and it has to change now. The final plan is negotiated by a few lawmakers behind closed doors and the rest of us will be handed a thousand-page document and told, “No time... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

**July 28**
**House GOP vows to fight budget plan passed by Pa. Senate**
House Republican leaders told members Thursday they won't support a Senate-crafted revenue package to cover Pennsylvania's new budget. “The amendments to these bills were neither agreed-to, nor shared with the House in advance of the committee meetings, so we certainly have no... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

**State drops the ball on school funding**
When state lawmakers come calling for voter support next year, no doubt one of the things
they'll crow about is how they boosted basic education funding by $100 million in the 2017-18 state budget. (Which, by the way, still isn't funded.) Thank you for reading!... - Levittown Bucks County Courier Times

**Budget bill passes state Senate without support of local GOP lawmakers**
Although the budget deal struck between Gov. Tom Wolf and state Senate leaders narrowly passed on Thursday, the three local Republican senators voted against it. A revenue plan for the budget passed 26-24 and now heads to an uncertain fate in the state House, where conservative Republicans are expected to... - Beaver County Times

**Any plans to build a casino in Lancaster County should come up snake eyes**
THE ISSUE State officials are setting their sights on gambling expansion in an effort to fill a $2 billion budget deficit, LNP reported Wednesday. One of several proposals under consideration in recent weeks would allow for 10 new “satellite casinos.” With up to 700 slot machines and 100 table... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

**Gas industry concerned over Senate’s revenue proposal**
The state Senate passed a budget bill early Thursday, hoping to pay for the already-approved $32 billion General Appropriations Bill, which became law on July 10, without Gov. Tom Wolf’s signature. The bill passed the Senate, 34 to 16. Among the items in the budget was a tax increase on the use of natural gas,... - Titusville Herald

**State Senate approves Medicaid work requirement**
The state Senate passed a bill Thursday that would impose work requirements on people enrolled in Medicaid. Senators amended the bill, which passed the House two weeks ago, and sent it back to the House for another vote, according to vote information on the... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

**No budget yet: Pa. House majority starts 'review' of Senate/Wolf plan**
This ain't over. That was the no-so-subtle subtext of a memo sent by leaders of the Pennsylvania House's Republican majority to their 120-member caucus Thursday, hours after the Senate passed a $2.2 billion revenue package that included about $530 million in new taxes.... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

**York’s senators oppose Senate’s plan to close $2.2B budget hole**
The Pennsylvania Senate on Thursday approved a plan to balance the state budget that includes heavy borrowing and some tax increases, including a severance tax on Marcellus Shale gas drilling and new or higher taxes on consumers' utility bills... - AP

**What do Pa. Senate and House GOPs agree on re state budget? A work / work search requirement for Medicaid**
The crusade to control another throbbing engine of state government spending growth - medical assistance - picked up a little more steam this week. The state Senate, in its budget...
package, included a work / work-search requirement for able-bodied persons receiving benefits from Pennsylvania's... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Editorial: The math did not lie in Harrisburg**
Even in the fantasyland of state finance that is par for the course in Harrisburg, the math was inescapable. That’s what happens when you pass a budget that calls for $32 billion in spending, but only contains $30 billion in revenue. You do the math. Yep, it does not add up.... - *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*

**Senate passes tax plan to potentially balance state budget**
HARRISBURG — The state Senate voted 26-24 Thursday to balance the state budget by borrowing $1.2 billion and creating a new tax on drilling, part of more than $500 million in tax increases. The vote comes almost a month after the Legislature sent the governor a $32... - *Sunbury Daily Item*

**Pa. Senate approves taxing natural gas drillers and utility bills**
HARRISBURG — After his no-new-taxes budget proposal went nowhere last weekend, Republican House Speaker Mike Turzai challenged his GOP colleagues in the state Senate: You try doing something. On Thursday, the Senate delivered, narrowly approving a plan to balance... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**Editorial: Pennsylvania needs a budget with the means to fund it**
The Issue: Unfortunately, a recently passed Senate plan relies on more than $1 billion in borrowing. Our Opinion: Lawmakers should not leave Harrisburg until they find the money to pay for their spending. The game of budgetary chicken in Harrisburg might be coming to an end, but... - *Reading Eagle*

**Senate closer to tax reality**
State senators congratulated themselves Thursday for making tough choices after approving a revenue package to cover a $2.2 billion state deficit. But those choices are not as tough as the lawmakers claimed. They do, however, finally reveal the truth about legislative Republicans’... - *Scranton Times*

**Industry, lawmakers give thumbs down to Senate gas tax proposal**
Natural gas industry groups were quick to issue statements Thursday in response to the state Senate’s recommendations to raise an estimated $100 million a year by imposing a new volume tax on natural gas from the Marcellus Shale, the nation’s largest natural gas field.... - *Washington Observer-Reporter*

**July 27**
*The Heron’s Nest: Who pays more under Pa. Senate plan; fitting honor for Bianca Roberson*
Here’s the bottom line on the ongoing budget battle in Harrisburg. The numbers did not change, no matter how much cajoling and arm-twisting was done. The Legislature passed a $32
billion spending plan, but only accounted for about $30 billion in revenue. You do the math.... - *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*

**Tax hikes may be coming to Pa.: 'We have avoided this day for a long time'*

The state Senate will vote today on a $2.2 billion revenue package that includes a mixed bag of new taxes and tax rate increases needed to bring the $32 billion state budget into balance. It includes a new tax on natural gas consumption, a higher tax rate on... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Pennsylvania Senate poised to vote on plan for $550 million in new taxes**

The Pennsylvania Senate is poised to vote on a bill that would produce $551.5 million in new taxes for the cash-strapped state. That bill — should it pass the Senate Thursday and the House at an unset future date — would include: $405 million from higher consumption... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**Pennsylvania Senate approves budget balanced by drilling, utility taxes**

HARRISBURG — The state Senate on Thursday narrowly approved a plan to balance Pennsylvania's $32 billion budget by taxing drilling for natural gas and raising or imposing new taxes on telephone, electric and gas services. "It's a tough day for many of us," Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman,... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Pa. Senate sends $2.2 billion revenue package, including tax hikes, to the House**

The state Senate on Thursday voted narrowly to deliver a $2.2 billion revenue package to the House of Representatives to consider as a way to balance the $32 billion state spending plan enacted earlier this month. Inside that bi-partisan-backed plan are a mix of new taxes and tax rate... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Pa. lawmakers need to reject severance tax push - here's why: Opinion**

By Daniel J. Weaver It has become an annual ritual at crunch-time as the House and Senate work to find the revenue to fund a state budget: legislators whose constituents are receiving the benefits of lower electricity prices and cleaner air propose a natural gas severance tax that will adversely factor into... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**No budget? No problem. We'll just keep spending: Opinion**

One would think that the lack of a state budget in Pennsylvania would mean that most of the commonwealth would be shut down. Think again, say scholars at the Allegheny Institute for Public Policy. "Indeed all state government employees are still showing up for work each... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Letters to the Editor: Harrisburg still has a spending problem**

Last year, the Pennsylvania Legislature approved – and Gov. Wolf signed – a $650 million tax increase. The result? The state economy slowed to a crawl, nearly 100 vape shops closed, and a $1.6 billion budget deficit emerged. Lawmakers would do well to learn from that mistake.... - *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*
Obvious fixes
State senators returned to the Capitol Wednesday for a two-day effort to fund the $32 billion in appropriations that they approved, overwhelmingly, a month ago. Whether they do better than their House Republican colleagues — who conducted a rare weekend session to demonstrate their earnestness and then... - Scranton Times

Pew report shows feds fund nearly third of PA budget
The federal government funded about 30.6 percent of Pennsylvania's budget in 2015, according to a new report from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The organization's website includes an interactive graphic to compare state's federal funding. That puts the state slightly below the average for all states, which was... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Highlights of Pennsylvania Senate's $2.2B revenue package
The Pennsylvania Senate is advancing a revenue package to patch a more than $2 billion hole in the state's $32 billion budget for the fiscal year that began July 1. Final votes are expected Thursday, although it could face opposition in the House of Representatives before it reaches the desk of... - AP

Natural gas takes a starring role in Pa. Senate's tax plan
Gov. Tom Wolf took a step toward checking a big box off his list of unfulfilled campaign promises Wednesday, as state Senate leaders proposed a tax on Marcellus Shale natural gas production as part of the overdue 2017-18 state budget package. The Senate plan is based on production volume from each individual gas... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Pennsylvania Senate Republicans agree on budget hole fix
HARRISBURG — Republicans who control the Pennsylvania Senate discussed the possibility of a severance tax on Marcellus Shale gas drillers Wednesday as they sought agreement on a plan to plug a $2 billion hole in the state budget... - AP

Here's a modest proposal to balance the #PaBudget: Opinion

Gas industry denounces possible Pa. severance tax
Gas drillers are denouncing legislation passed by the Pennsylvania Senate that would impose a severance tax on natural gas production, while environmental advocates assert the bill "emasculates" state regulators who oversee the industry... - AP

State funding not keeping up with pension, charter costs, Bucks, Montgomery school officials say
New Hope-Solebury will receive only an additional $6,006 in basic education funding from the state in 2017-18; the cost of a beat-up used car. Like Council Rock and Palisades, NH-S is set to
receive less than a 1 percent increase in both its basic education and special education... - Levittown Intelligencer

Pa. Senate considering tax on natural gas drillers to balance budget
HARRISBURG — Working late Wednesday night to close a $2 billion gap in the state’s $32 billion budget, the Republican-controlled Senate began pushing a plan to tax drilling for natural gas, and raise or impose new taxes on consumers’ telephone, electric, and gas bills.... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Senate tax package will cause utility bills, online purchases, fireworks to cost more
Consumers may have to reconfigure their household budgets under the tax package the Senate is considering to help balance the $32 billion budget that became law earlier this month. The $2.2 billion revenue package that the Senate is teeing up for a vote on Thursday to pay for that spending plan includes new taxes and higher tax... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

York’s senators oppose Senate’s plan to close $2.2B budget hole
The Pennsylvania Senate on Thursday approved a plan to balance the state budget that includes heavy borrowing and some tax increases, including a severance tax on Marcellus Shale gas drilling and new or higher taxes on consumers' utility bills... - AP

Pa. Senate books funds from gambling expansion, but postpones vote on details
The $2.2 billion revenue package endorsed by state Senate leadership Wednesday night has a $200 million tail, and it is the expansion of legalized gambling. The Senate, Gov. Tom Wolf and House Democrats are said to be close on a gambling package that would allow Internet-based games for... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Pennsylvania Senate to vote on plan to close $2B budget hole
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Consumers’ utility bills would go up, Marcellus Shale drillers would pay a tax they’ve long resisted and Pennsylvania would make a new effort to capture tax revenue from internet sales under legislation poised for a vote in the state Senate... - AP

Pa. lawmakers need to reject severance tax push - here's why: Opinion
It has become an annual ritual at crunch-time as the House and Senate work to find the revenue to fund a state budget: legislators whose constituents are receiving the benefits of lower electricity prices and cleaner air propose a natural gas severance tax that will adversely factor into... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

July 26
The debate over Pa’s severance tax - explained in two letters to Mike Turzai: Opinion
State House Speaker Mike Turzai was the recipient of a pair of interesting letters this month, dated July 10 and July 18. Colin McNickle (PennLive file) Colin McNickle (PennLive file) The first letter came from the office of state Rep. Gene DiGirolamo. The Bucks County Republican signed it, as did 14 of his colleagues --... - Harrisburg Patriot-News
Pennsylvania budget fight heating up politics only
Wednesday marks the 25th day without a fully functioning state budget in Pennsylvania. The state Senate plans on returning Wednesday and Thursday to possibly vote on a package of revenue and tax ideas to help pay for a $32 billion spending bill that the Legislature approved on June 30 and that Gov. Tom... - Allentown Morning Call

Budget stalemate revives debate over taxing drillers
With the state Legislature stymied over how to balance a $32 billion state budget, the time is ripe to add an extraction tax on gas drilling in Pennsylvania, state Rep. Gene DiGirolamo said Tuesday. “It’s going to happen sooner or later,” he said. “With what happened last weekend” when Republicans considered a... - New Castle News

Be for real, Pennsylvania; raise the state income tax to pay your bills
The Pennsylvania legislature needs to rendezvous with reality. It can no longer live in the fantasy world where it refuses to cut spending, refuses to raise taxes to pay for that spending, and refuses to borrow money to paper over the $2.2 billion-plus deficit the state faces.... - Philadelphia Inquirer

No budget? No pay - seriously: Editorial
Welcome to Week Four of Budget Stalemate 2017. If week four seems like week three, or week two or week one, and you’re not feeling any pain from the failure of our elected leaders to execute (competently or otherwise) one of the main things, by law, they’re charged... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

There is no excuse for budget deficits
To the editor: Pennsylvania needs to update its tax code and provide for its revenue collection by amending the state’s constitution to adopt a new tax and abolish the present unfair taxes, including property taxes. That one new tax is a graduated income tax based on the ability to pay.... - Lewistown Sentinel

State Senate again will try to fund Pennsylvania’s budget
HARRISBURG — It’s back to Plan A. The full Pennsylvania Senate is scheduled to return to the Capitol Wednesday for a two-day stay, and it could begin voting on bills to raise new revenue for the state’s cash-strapped coffers through a mix of borrowing and new taxes.... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Harrisburg’s race to irrelevancy
After a while – and by “a while,” I mean decades – you’ve got to wonder why we need a state legislature. Here we are (again) awaiting some action on a constitutionally mandated annual balanced state budget that’s (again) overdue and will be, I guarantee, nowhere near balanced when finally done.... - Philadelphia Daily News

Heat on Harrisburg: Keep pressure on to solve revenue side of budget
He’s warned them. State Treasurer Joe Torsella has made it clear to lawmakers and Gov. Tom
Wolf that, absent a revenue package to support the new budget, the state could run out of money to cover all of its bills as soon as late August. What happens then? Mr. Torsella, a Democrat, says he may have to make some...

**Pennsylvania Senate seeks way to fund state budget**
The Pennsylvania Senate has returned to the Capitol to see if it can plug a $2 billion hole in the state budget, which took effect July 1...

**We need a severance tax? Let me count the ways that’s a bad idea: Stephen Mohr**
Here we go again. In a recent PennLive op-Ed, former Patriot-News Opinion writer Herb Field has asked students, young families, and grandparents to make a bargain with the devil by poll-parroting what misinformed folks in Harrisburg keep repeating: "We need a gas severance tax."...

**July 25**
**This policy hurts families with autism - let's get rid of it once and for all: Opinion**
The current version of a piece of budget-related legislation known as the Human Services Code that passed the House last week, contains a provision designed to charge certain families with profoundly disabled children for access to Medicaid. This idea has surfaced every few years for the last 15...

**What Pa.’s House speaker is doing while the state waits on a finalized budget**
If you are looking for House Speaker Mike Turzai, you will have to go to Georgia to find him. He is down there attending a gathering of Republican lawmakers in his role as chairman of the Republican Legislative Campaign Committee, which bills itself as the only national organization focused on a mission of electing...

**Turzai should get House out of way**
House Speaker Mike Turzai scheduled a rare weekend session of his chamber, anticipating that it finally would pass a bill to actually fund the purported state budget that it passed nearly a month ago. Scheduling a Saturday session on a high-profile bill is equivalent to the...

**Protesters push Mike Turzai to balance state budget and tax corporations**
A few dozen demonstrators from activist group Pittsburgh United, unions and other groups gathered outside State Rep. Mike Turzai’s office in McCandless on Tuesday to demand that the Pennsylvania House speaker balance the state budget by taxing shale and corporations...

**Berks lawmakers sound off on state budget**
A weekend meeting of the state House of Representatives didn’t do much to resolve the problem of addressing Pennsylvania's $2 billion budget shortfall. "The call to bring the House back Saturday seems like pure political theater," said state Sen. Judy Schwank, a Ruscombmanor Township Democrat...
July 24

**Letter to the editor | We need accountability from our lawmakers**

We elect our legislators to represent us and run our city, state or federal governments. A major part of their job is to run their respective governments on a budget. I am upset that our representatives in Harrisburg do not do this. I propose that if the Legislature does not submit a balanced budget prior to the...

- Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

**Legislature may add Medicaid changes to state budget bills**

A little-noticed provision tucked into one of the budget bills under consideration in the General Assembly would add controversial changes to Medicaid in Pennsylvania. The update to the state Human Services Code would include a work requirement for able-bodied adults enrolled in Medicaid. It would also add...

- New Castle News

**PA Senate To Return This Week After House Strikes Out In Budget Effort**

Another Saturday session of the state House produced no breakthrough in the stalemate over revenues to pay for Pennsylvania’s new budget. The state Senate is expected to return this coming week. State House members met behind closed doors for several hours Saturday and...

- KYW News Radio 1060

**Taxes, Borrowing, Gaming At Heart Of PA Budget Impasse**

Pennsylvania has a new budget but still no plan to pay for it. A Sunday session of the state House was cancelled after majority Republicans, meeting behind closed doors Saturday, failed to rally around Speaker Mike Turzai’s proposal to close the budget gap without tax...

- KYW News Radio 1060

July 23

**Pa. House members leave Saturday session without a budget vote**

State representatives gathered in Harrisburg for a few hours Saturday and left without taking any votes, as Republican leadership punted responsibility for balancing the budget to the state Senate and the governor. It was a blow to House Speaker Mike Turzai (R., Allegheny), who last week...

- Philadelphia Inquirer

**Convert state budget cycle to two years**

State House Speaker Mike Turzai has called the chamber into session today and Sunday, probably to vote on funding a state budget that is three weeks overdue. If the revenue piece is what the Allegheny County Republican hinted at Tuesday, he shouldn’t bother with a vote....

- Scranton Times

**Here’s the educator’s case for a severance tax: Opinion**

By Jerry T. Jordan The mounting turmoil in Washington, D.C. has highlighted the necessity of action and political mobilization at the state and local level. This "resistance" will be vital for cities and rural areas alike in the face of national policies designed to defund public education and strip resources...

- Harrisburg Patriot-News
Sales job begins on Pa. House Speaker's budget proposal
House Republicans worked through the day Saturday trying to see if they have the votes to attempt a daring reset of the 2017 state budget talks. The majority caucus is being asked by its top leader, Speaker Mike Turzai, to pass a no-new-taxes revenue plan to balance the state’s $32 billion... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

State wants to drill gas customers, instead of frackers
Of all the terrible, unfair and just plain stupid ideas flowing out of Harrisburg these days over how to plug a $2 billion-plus hole in the state budget, this takes the cake. An idea is being circulated in Republican circles to get revenue from the natural gas boom in Pennsylvania – not by taxing the large companies... - *Philadelphia Daily News*

State lawmakers fail to plug $2 billion budget gap
A House Republican effort to plug a $2 billion hole in the state budget without raising taxes stalled after a lengthy closed-door GOP caucus Saturday, leaving the Pennsylvania Legislature no closer to fully funding the spending plan it passed earlier this month... - *AP*

Pa. leaders gambling with state’s fiscal health | Editorial
Faced with a giant budget deficit and a potential blow to the state’s credit rating, Republican legislators in Harrisburg are singing a familiar refrain: Let’s get more people to gamble. What could possibly go wrong? If you’ve been following the budget crisis -- three weeks without a plan... - *Easton Express-Times*

House Republicans boot balancing budget to Senate
State representatives gathered in Harrisburg for a few hours Saturday and left without taking any votes, as Republican leadership puntend responsibility for balancing the budget to the state Senate and the governor. It was a blow to House Speaker Mike Turzai, R-Marshall, who this week took... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

Plan B revenue package hits wall in Pa. House; Speaker Turzai challenges Senate, governor to lead
Pennsylvania’s budget debate will likely re-set next week, not terribly far off from the spot it was last week. The question is, who can take the next step forward toward passing a $2.2 billion revenue plan needed to balance the already-passed $32 billion state... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

July 22
Sales job begins on Pa. House Speaker’s budget proposal
House Republicans worked through the day Saturday trying to see if they have the votes to attempt a daring reset of the 2017 state budget talks. The majority caucus is being asked by its top leader, Speaker Mike Turzai, to pass a no-new-taxes revenue plan to balance the state’s $32 billion... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*
Start with the size of the Legislature to trim Pa.’s budget
Regarding the state budget: Close the annual budget gap by reducing the size of the Legislature by 50 percent. WILLIAM R. CASEY West Mifflin - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pa. House Speaker Mike Turzai’s big budget gamble
Republican House Speaker Mike Turzai, perhaps the most powerful person in the state Capitol these days, left a high-powered meeting last week amid the state’s tense budget impasse looking unruffled. “We had a very positive discussion,” he said before striding down a... - Philadelphia Inquirer

The Latest: Lawmakers head home without movement on revenues
An effort by House Republicans to plug a $2 billion budget gap without raising taxes has stalled and lawmakers are going home after several hours of closed-door meetings... - AP

Nathan Benefield: Should you pay a cable TV tax to watch 'The Walking Dead'?
Thanks to last year’s state budget, you're paying more to watch "House of Cards." This year, "The Walking Dead" — and a host of other cable TV shows — could cost you more, too. Just one year ago, lawmakers passed an unpaid-for state spending plan, which Gov. Wolf let become law. To fill the gap, they all agreed to a $650... - Allentown Morning Call

Pennsylvania House’s $2 billion no-new-taxes revenue plan could be thorny
HARRISBURG — The question of where to find $2 billion will dominate the upcoming weekend session by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives as Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf and the Republican-controlled Legislature stumble through a three-week stalemate. House Speaker Mike Turzai, R-Allegheny, wants House members to support a... - Allentown Morning Call

July 21
It’s Mike Turzai's fault - and two more things we know about the budget: Friday Morning Coffee
Good Friday Morning, Fellow Seekers. Today is Friday, July 21, 2017. We’re heading into a month without a completed state budget. To keep you up to date, here’s a handy, clip-and-save guide on where things stand right now. 1. It’s gonna be a long, hot weekend: And we’re not even talking about... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Gambling Expansion Could Bring Casino to State College Area
Casino and gaming expansions are at the heart of budget and funding talks between Pennsylvania’s branches of government. Some lawmakers hope to use gambling expansion in the state as a source of revenue for the $32 billion state budget that was passed June 30, but without a plan to pay for... - State College News

From Pa. Democrats - This is how to end Pa's budget stalemate: Opinion
Pennsylvania is now headed into the fourth week of the fiscal year and the long-running battle over a revenue plan to fund the new $32 billion state budget continues. State Rep. Frank
House to hold session amid swirling budget disagreements
The Pennsylvania House of Representatives prepared to return to Harrisburg for an unusual weekend session amid a three-week stalemate with the Senate and Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf over how to resolve a gaping hole in state government’s $32 billion budget plan. - AP

House takes a turn at trying to solve state budget puzzle
HARRISBURG — Members of the state House will return to the Capitol Saturday as lawmakers struggle to thread the needle in a way that satisfies conservative lawmakers, a Democratic governor and the need to balance a budget with a $2.2 billion shortfall. It’s far from clear that an immediate agreement is in the offing. - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

Place your bets: Will Pa. allow casinos to open satellite sites?
Pennsylvania could double-down on its casinos, at least under a proposal to help balance the state’s $32 billion budget. Under a plan proposed by Senate Republicans, each of the state’s 10 bigger casinos would bid on a license for a "satellite" casino. That would allow... - Easton Express-Times

More than $570K in prior cuts are restored to Pennsylvania’s budget
While discussions over how to fix a $2 billion shortfall in Pennsylvania’s budget remained deadlocked in Harrisburg, Armstrong County’s commissioners were able to work with State Sen. Don White to restore more than $570,000 in prior cuts. - Kittanning Leader-Times

House takes a turn at trying to solve budget puzzle
HARRISBURG — Members of the state House will return to the Capitol Saturday as lawmakers struggle to thread the needle in a way that satisfies conservative lawmakers, a Democratic governor and the need to balance a budget with a $2.2 billion shortfall. It’s far from clear that an immediate agreement is in the offing. - Sunbury Daily Item

July 20
Lawmakers mull opening 'satellite casinos' in an attempt to balance the state budget
Pennsylvania may be on the verge of becoming a national gambling guinea pig. To help balance the still-unfinished, $32 billion state budget, lawmakers have proposed establishment of up to 10 new "satellite" casinos to be scattered around Pennsylvania. Are you all ready for intentionally small casinos in places like Reading? - Harrisburg Patriot-News

House Republicans need to get serious about solving Pa’s revenue problems: Editorial
Always handy with a quip, former state Sen. John Wozniak, D-Cambria, used to joke that, when it came to making the tough choices in Harrisburg during budget season, "everyone wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die." In that case, the non-starter of a revenue plan that state House... - Harrisburg Patriot-News
Budget impasse could impact Pennsylvania's state-related universities, including Pitt and Penn State
State Senate and House Democratic caucus leaders chided the Republican House leadership late Wednesday over the Commonwealth’s continuing budget impasse and its potential impact on Pennsylvania’s four state-related universities. State Sen. Jay Costa, D-Forest Hills, and Rep. Frank Dermody, D-Oakmont,... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pa. House leaders calling members back to work on budget-related bills
The House of Representatives are calling their members back to Harrisburg for a rare weekend session to consider some budget-related bills. But don’t take that to mean a deal has been reached on a plan to pay for Pennsylvania’s $32 billion unfunded state budget.... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

House to hold session amid swirling budget disagreements
HARRISBURG, PA. The Pennsylvania House of Representatives is scheduled to return to session this weekend, amid a three-week stalemate with the Senate and Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf over how to resolve state government’s deficit... - AP

Using duct tape on Pennsylvania budget no solution
Muhlenberg College political science professor and pollster Chris Borick took his son to Maine, where they climbed Mount Katahdin on the Appalachian Trail. Borick brought his old tent along so they could camp, but one of the ancient aluminum poles snapped, and he had to duct tape it together.... - Allentown Morning Call

Guest Column: Following latest Pa. budget debacle, it’s time to use revenue options
For the past seven years, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have had majority control of our state government. For four of those years, they’ve had total control. During that time, their fiscal policy has been disastrous for Pennsylvania. Rather than engage in real solutions for... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

July 19
The state budget impasse need not be so complicated
The state budget is lurching through another July impasse, while social services, schools and innumerable other interests wait for results that will greatly impact their budgets for the next 12 months and beyond. It’s really quite simple. There’s a $2 billion gap between the $32 billion budget on the table... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Pa. state budget update: House Republicans offer new no-taxes plan to raise revenue
The state budget talks slipped back a step Tuesday. What remains to be seen, however, is whether that’s true slippage, or just a search for firmer footing from which the final climb to completion can launch. The main development Tuesday was delivery by top House Republican leaders... - Harrisburg Patriot-News
House Republicans need to get serious about solving Pa’s revenue problems: Editorial
Always handy with a quip, former state Sen. John Wozniak, D-Cambria, used to joke that, when it came to making the tough choices in Harrisburg during budget season, "everyone wants to go to heaven but nobody wants to die." In that case, the non-starter of a revenue plan that state House... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Negotiations on how to fund Pennsylvania budget take a turn for the worse
HARRISBURG — As Pennsylvania’s state budget impasse drags on, House Republican leaders appear to be emerging as the holdouts in talks. Top legislative Democrats said Tuesday that House GOP leaders presented a counter-proposal Tuesday that does not contain many of the items that had... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Lawmakers continue talks about funding Pa. budget
State senators from Delaware County said Tuesday budget discussions among their leaders continue while elected and industry officials debate the optimum way to fund this year’s financial package. The $32 billion spending package became law after it was passed by the... - West Chester Daily Local News

Pennsylvania budget shocker: House GOP backs off raising taxes
Efforts to end Pennsylvania’s 18-day stalemate over how to pay for a $32 billion budget took an unexpected turn Tuesday when House Republican leaders abruptly retreated from discussions over raising taxes to help stitch together the state government’s threadbare finance... - AP

Tax amnesty nets $115M for revenue-starved Pa., a bit short of hopes
Pennsylvania's amnesty program, which waived fees and penalties for delinquent taxpayers, brought in $114.5 million to help balance the state's looming deficit. The collections fell short of original projections, which ranged from $130 million to $150 million, but the program will help the state balance its... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Lawmakers may feel little push to close out budget
The struggle to balance the state budget isn’t helped by the fact that there’s little public pressure to solve the problem, said G. Terry Madonna, a political science professor at Franklin and Marshall College. Gov. Tom Wolf, a first-term Democrat, looking ahead to next year’s... - New Castle News

Pennsylvania Budget Revenue Talks Grind On
–Another day, another layer of uncertainty Tuesday as talks on how to pay for Pennsylvania’s new budget plod along. Democratic legislative leaders alleged that House majority Republicans are now balking at “recurring” revenue as part of a plan to fund the budget that is still being negotiated. While no increases in sales or... - KYW News Radio 1060

July 18
Senate returns to Capitol but revenue plan to balance budget remains elusive
The state Senate returned to the Capitol on Monday to "put pressure on the process" to finalize
Revenue Negotiations Drag On At PA Capitol
underfunded budget bill to lapse into law, there was still no indication Monday that a deal on plan to pay for it was coming together. Governor Wolf has allowed the budget bill to become law without his signature. But budget companion legislation known as “code bills”... - KYW News Radio 1060

Talks over Pennsylvania budget deadlock take unexpected turn
Efforts to end Pennsylvania's 18-day stalemate over how to pay for a nearly $32 billion budget took an unexpected turn... - AP

Senate GOP leader says 'we have some work to do yet' to finalize a 2017-18 state budget
If an effort to finalize a 2017-18 general fund revenue package were determined by the length of a meeting where it was discussed, Pennsylvania might possibly have had an agreement on one by day’s end Monday. But that’s not how it works. A meeting between the top two Republican leaders that lasted 105 minutes... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Pa. Senate back in Capitol
HARRISBURG — The Senate returned to the State Capitol early Monday afternoon with good intentions: to consider various bills related to the still-incomplete state budget. But by day’s end, the chamber had canceled committee meetings planned to start moving those bills along the legislative pipeline. And though... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Forced to pay
Over two years ago, Gov. Tom Wolf, some Pennsylvania lawmakers and enforcement officers frequently gave speeches about quality Pre-Kindergarten and child-parent programs. They often used Chicago as an example of what Pennsylvania could do to fight crime. Today, some school board members are telling young parents that if their... - Lock Haven Express

Senators return to state Capitol, but budget deal remains elusive
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania senators returned to the Capitol on Monday but with no agreements in sight on the 17th day of a stalemate on elements of the state government’s threadbare budget that, by all projections, would lack the tax collections to sustain it for an entire year... - AP

July 17
Baer: Tom Wolf’s double dilemma
Gov. Wolf is in a tough place. He’ll soon have to decide what to do with whatever lame-o revenue package the world’s worst legislative body sends him to pay for the state’s new $32 billion spending plan, part of a half-baked budget that was supposed to take effect July 1.... - Philadelphia Daily News
Treasurer issues warning as lawmakers struggle to balance budget
The state Senate is scheduled to return to the Capitol on Monday to resume work on legislation to balance the $32 billion spending plan that became law last week. “We are happy with the progress this week and are hopeful the weekend will allow for continued progress toward a final plan,” said Jennifer... - New Castle News

A severance tax needs to be part of the final budget deal, here’s why: Opinion
At least 36 states impose a severance tax of some kind, 31 on oil and/or gas, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. But Gene Barr, president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry, would have us - and in particular, state lawmakers - believe... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Editorial: Welcome to the land of unfunded budgets
Welcome to Pennsylvania, the land of unfunded budgets. You read it right. Our elected leaders managed to do something they have not always done in the past. They put a spending plan in place by the state-mandated deadline of July 1. But don’t do any backflips or other contortions celebrating such a... - West Chester Daily Local News

Editorial: How fiscal follies rule in Harrisburg
Welcome to Pennsylvania, the land of unfunded budgets. You read it right. Our elected leaders managed to do something they have not always done in the past. They put a spending plan in place by the state-mandated deadline of July 1. But don’t do any backflips or other contortions celebrating such a... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

Pa. is the 9th worst-run state in the country: Monday Morning Coffee
Good Monday Morning, Fellow Seekers. It’s no secret that Pennsylvania is something of a hot mess, politically speaking. We have epic levels of public corruption; exploding public pension debt and finances shakier than a 1950s B-movie confidence man’s. But now, as the Republican-controlled General Assembly and the Democratic... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Pa. budget deadlock politics are first act in governor’s race
HARRISBURG (AP) — Call it the first act of the governor’s race... - AP

Senators return to Capitol, but budget deal remains elusive
Pennsylvania senators are back in the Capitol, but with no agreements in sight on elements of the state government’s threadbare budget... - AP

July 16
Stop the yearly Pa. budget madness
Why is it that Pennsylvania’s $32 billion budget can barely get done on time? Almost every year! And then legislators pat themselves on the back. What arrogance! With a $2.2 billion deficit (including a $1.5 billion shortfall from last year), there is nothing to celebrate.... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Budget deadlock politics are first debate in governor’s race
Call it the first act of the governor’s race... - AP

A budget circus? Yes. But this is no fun (state) House: Opinion

Bad, and more broken than ever
Pennsylvania’s budget process is broken. The legislature and governor cannot craft a budget that makes economic sense for the state. This year, political gamesmanship again created an impasse that will almost assuredly lead to another unbalanced budget that fails to deal with the key issues... - Philadelphia Inquirer

July 14
Without revenue package, treasurer warns, Pa. might have to stop spending
HARRISBURG - State Treasurer Joe Torsella warned Thursday that Pennsylvania could run out of money to pay its bills by the end of August unless the Legislature quickly passes a revenue package to balance its budget. That’s alarmingly early in the fiscal year, said Mr. Torsella, who... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

July 13
Pennsylvania’s recent history of hide-and-go-seek with revenue
A .500 average is considered excellent in baseball, but not budget politics. Over the past 12 years, the actual revenue for Pennsylvania has fallen short of the projected revenue six times. As shown in the graph below, 2009 was the largest revenue shortage, missing... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Editorial | Wolf sidesteps budget responsibilities
We find it unacceptable that Gov. Tom Wolf has again refused to sign a state budget proposal, choosing to wash his hands of the governing process rather than seek ways to work with members of the General Assembly to reduce expenses and produce a balanced spending plan.... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

A double standard in principles creates state budget woes
The state budget beat goes on. Gov. Tom Wolf lets a $32 billion spending plan become law without his signature. Lawmakers are left with a $2 billion gap between the spending plan and available revenues. Unwilling to raise taxes and uncomfortable with a battery of alternatives,... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

With budget in chaos, Republicans go home
Republican leaders in the Pennsylvania Legislature came up with a new strategy this week to
address the state's budget debacle. With talks stalemated over how to pay for the nearly $32 billion spending plan that recently became law, House GOP leaders said, in effect, "What the heck!"... - *Levittown Bucks County Courier Times*

**July 12**

**Don’t expect much more than a status quo budget from the Legislature**

THE ISSUE For the second straight year, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf allowed a state budget bill to become law without his signature. Negotiations between Wolf, a Democrat, and the Republican-controlled Legislature collapsed before the midnight deadline. Lawmakers still have not produced a plan to pay for the... - *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*

**Baer: Harrisburg’s pure political wind**

George Orwell wrote it better than I can. In a 1946 essay, “Politics and the English Language,” he wrote that political language is “designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.” Well, pure wind is blowing in Harrisburg.... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**Bipartisan pressure growing in Pa. House for a vote on a shale tax bill**

With pressure building to find a way to pay for the state’s $32 billion spending plan for 2017-18 that is now law, a bipartisan group of House members are calling on House Speaker Mike Turzai to allow for a vote on a bill that imposes a severance tax on natural gas drillers.... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Pa.’s fractured fairy tale: The Budget Grim**

At the stroke of midnight Monday, the gilded carriage that Pennsylvania lawmakers passed off as a responsible state budget bill reverted to its true form — a rotten pumpkin without a revenue package. And just as he did last year, Democrat Gov. Tom Wolf, the prince of... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**Berks lawmakers voice frustrations over budget talks**

State Sen. David G. Argall, a Schuylkill County Republican who represents part of Berks “The governor has failed Pennsylvania by not putting dollars into reserve as other Republican and Democratic governors have done in the past, leaving the taxpayer with an astronomical $2.2 billion deficit. I’m sure many of us... - *Reading Eagle*

**Talks at a stalemate over Pennsylvania’s unbalanced budget**

HARRISBURG — A flurry of deadline-driven budget work quieted Tuesday in the Pennsylvania Capitol as the state’s divided government trudged forward in a stalemate over a budget that is badly out of balance and legally questionable. Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf remained out of sight Tuesday, and top lawmakers... - *AP*

**Is legal recreational pot the key to closing Pa’s budget hole?: Wednesday Morning Coffee**

Good Wednesday Morning, Fellow Seekers. Today is Wednesday, July 12, 2017. We're officially 12 days into the new fiscal year. And, as of this writing, rank-and-file lawmakers are at
home cooling their jets until the grown-ups can figure out a way to break a worsening stalemate. - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Wolf tight-lipped but optimistic on budget deal**
Gov. Tom Wolf on Wednesday said he believes negotiators from his office and the state legislature are “close” to striking a deal on how to pay for the nearly $32 billion spending plan that he allowed to become law without his signature. But in his first public appearance since the budget plan was enacted, the... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**With budget talks at a stalemate, lawmakers sent home until deal is reached**
Pennsylvania will remain one of the six states without a finalized state budget package for at least a few more days if not longer. Talks appeared on Tuesday to have reached a stalemate on a $2.2 billion revenue package to support the $32 billion spending plan that became law at... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Strapping deficit to poor**
The largest and second-costliest full-time state legislature in the United States, the Pennsylvania General Assembly, has redefined uselessness. By yet again passing a completely unbalanced “budget,” the Republican leadership of the House and Senate has demonstrated, yet again,... - *Scranton Times*

'**We can regroup and put it back together': Lawmakers head home without funding Pennsylvania’s state budget**
HARRISBURG — Although few are using the word stalemate to describe the state of budget talks in the Capitol, all signs point to difficult days, if not weeks, ahead for negotiations. Tuesday afternoon, with no deal on how to pay for the nearly $32 billion spending plan the Legislature has approved, House and Senate leaders told... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**July 11**
**Republicans' failed budgeting in Pennsylvania is definition of insanity**
To anyone, $3 billion is a lot of money — that’s what’s needed to balance Pennsylvania’s state budget. As stewards for the taxpayers of Pennsylvania, the Legislature is responsible for making sure that your hard-earned money is spent in your best interest and for the greater good of the commonwealth and that the tax... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**Unfinished 2017-18 budget package remains a work in progress**
If Gov. Tom Wolf has a special pen to use to sign a state budget, it must be still sitting untouched in its box. Wolf on Monday allowed the $32 billion bipartisan-backed spending plan for 2017-18 become law without his signature as the 10-day clock for him to act... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Pa. budget package remains work in progress; Senate GOP leader says they are 'trying to keep hope alive'**
Without question, Pennsylvania will start Tuesday without a finalized state budget but
lawmakers haven't given up on getting one finished in the coming days. "We're just trying to keep hope alive here and get things done," Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman, R-Centre County, told reporters following a... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Gov. Tom Wolf to let 2017-18 spending plan become law without his signature**
Gov. Tom Wolf has yet to know what it feels like to sign a state spending plan even though he is in his third year in office. Wolf issued a statement on Monday afternoon indicating he will allow the $32 billion spending plan for 2017-18 that the Legislature sent to his desk... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Gov. Tom Wolf to let Pennsylvania's state budget become law without full funding**
HARRISBURG — For the second consecutive year, Gov. Tom Wolf will allow the spending bill the Legislature has sent to him to become law, even though there is no plan for how to pay for it. Monday’s move once again plunged the state into uncertainty, with questions swirling around whether it is constitutional and whether it will... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Amid threat of downgrade, unbalanced budget bill becomes law**
HARRISBURG, PA. Pennsylvania lawmakers are to return to the Capitol for another session day, but without an agreement to fully fund the $32 billion budget bill they passed nearly two weeks ago and with the threat of a credit downgrade looming to the state's bruised credit rating... - *AP*

**Capitol goes quiet after unbalanced budget bill becomes law**
Pennsylvania lawmakers are back in the Capitol, but without any sign of agreement to fully fund the $32 billion budget bill they passed nearly two weeks ago... - *AP*

**Amid budget woes, consider myth of education funding**
As the state Legislature and Gov. Tom Wolf’s administration struggle to fashion a budget for 2017-18 that makes sense, there is a strong possibility that the funding allotment for public education will eventually become a major talking point. And there is an equal possibility that “cuts” in education funding... - *Williamsport Sun-Gazette*

**No suspense on school tax**
Suspense was palpable Monday at the state Capitol. Would Gov. Tom Wolf veto the $32 billion supposed “budget” that legislators passed without bothering to account for revenue? Would he sign it? Would he let it become law without his signature? There is no such suspense in school district boardrooms across the... - *Scranton Times*

**Viewpoint: Pro-growth policies needed to power Pa.**
It’s that time of year again. Elected Pennsylvania officials went past the June 30 budget deadline again, coming up with a spending plan in time but then scrambling to find monies to balance the budget and to fill an unending appetite of state government spending.... - *Reading Eagle*

**Pa. bill would add Medicaid work requirement as part of budget**
Pennsylvania’s Republican-controlled General Assembly is considering significant, last-minute
changes to the state’s Medicaid program. The changes would come as part of the state’s Human Services code, one of a number of code bills legislators must pass to enact the budget.... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**It’s on Republicans to put Pa. back in black: Opinion**
By Marty Flynn
To anyone, $3 billion is a lot of money that’s needed to balance Pennsylvania’s state budget. There are a few revenue options on the table, but they’ve received a cold shoulder from the Republican majorities who control the House and Senate. I think residents across Pennsylvania would rather see marijuana legalized... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

**Three’s a charm? Wolf withholds signature from third straight budget**
Gov. Tom Wolf said Monday afternoon that he will allow a $32 billion spending plan to become law without his signature after the governor and lawmakers failed to come to an agreement on how to overcome a $2 billion shortfall. “I am going to let this general appropriations bill become law without... - New Castle News

**$32 billion state budget becomes law without Wolf’s signature**
Gov. Tom Wolf said Monday afternoon that he will allow a $32 billion spending plan to become law without his signature after the governor and lawmakers failed to come to an agreement on how to overcome a $2 billion shortfall. “I am going to let this general appropriations bill become law without... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

**Masser ‘hopeful’ for funding resolution soon**
HARRISBURG — State Rep. Kurt Masser (R-107) said he is disappointed the Legislature has no agreed-upon plan for funding the state budget, but he remains hopeful there will be a final product soon. - Shamokin News-Item

**July 10**

**No revenue deal for state budget yet as Monday deadline looms**
HARRISBURG -- Come Monday night, Gov. Wolf will likely find himself in the same position he did last year: deciding whether to allow a multibillion-dollar spending bill to lapse into law, even though there is no plan for how to pay for it. Though the Republican-controlled legislature continued trying to find... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**Last day arrives for Wolf to act on $32B spending bill**
It looks increasingly unlikely that Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf will have funding legislation on his desk before he must decide on a nearly $32 billion spending bill... - AP

**With budget deadline near, Pa. lawmakers apart on revenue plan**
The clock is ticking at the Pennsylvania Capitol. After working through the weekend, members of the House and Senate returned to the Capitol Monday — but with no clear signs of a deal to close out the state budget for the new fiscal year. Senate Republicans arrived and began meeting behind closed doors after 11... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Another warning about state budget
Last week, Standard and Poor’s, one of the nation’s major credit-rating agencies, fired a warning shot over Harrisburg’s bow, putting Pennsylvania on notice that another downgrade of its credit worthiness is a distinct possibility unless the state’s fiscal picture improves.... - Levittown Bucks County Courier Times

Pennsylvania’s state budget debate hits end stages
Final agreement on the revenue mix to support Pennsylvania’s $32 billion 2017-18 state budget is getting close. But as of mid-afternoon Sunday there were still some major final questions to sort through that may be difficult to answer. In an interview between meetings Sunday afternoon that amounted to a... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

With a midnight deadline looming, 3 things to know about the #PaBudget: Monday Morning Coffee
Good Monday Morning, Fellow Seekers. Today is Monday July 10, and, in addition to being the start of another working week, it’s a day fraught with more than a little symbolism. That’s because Gov. Tom Wolf has until midnight tonight to decide whether to sign, veto or allow to lapse into law the $32 billion spending document... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Legislators eyes expansion to cover financial shortfall
Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf and leaders of the Republican-controlled Legislature were discussing legislation to expand casino-style gambling in Pennsylvania — already the nation’s No. 2 commercial casino state — in a bid to help the state government plug its biggest cash shortfall... - AP

Midnight deadline looms for a Pa. budget deal
The clock is ticking at the Pennsylvania Capitol. After working through the weekend, members of the House and Senate returned to the Capitol Monday — but with no clear signs of a deal to close out the state budget for the new fiscal year. Senate Republicans arrived and began meeting behind closed doors after 11... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Lawmakers brace for desperate push to balance budget
Lawmakers are bracing for a last-minute desperate push to get a series of budget bills to Gov. Tom Wolf before the governor must decide whether to accept an under-funded spending plan or take out his veto pen. The Legislature passed a $32 billion spending plan on June 30 but lawmakers... - New Castle News

The Latest: Passing revenue deal unlikely before deadline
A top Pennsylvania state senator says it looks increasingly unlikely that lawmakers will pass legislation to patch the state’s tattered finances before Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf must make a decision on a nearly $32 billion spending bill on his desk... - AP

Revenue puzzle in pieces day before spending bill deadline
HARRISBURG — Negotiators in Pennsylvania’s 9-day-old budget stalemate signaled Sunday that
they were having difficulty reaching agreement on a deal to scrounge more than $2 billion to patch up the state government's tattered finances... - *AP*

**Unbalanced state budget could become law tonight; GOP calls on Wolf to 'step up'**

Lawmakers say they probably won't get the budget done by Monday night, which means that an unbalanced spending plan will automatically become law unless Governor Tom Wolf vetoes all or part of it. The budget was due June 30. The House and Senate sent a spending plan to... - *York Daily*

**No deal yet between Gov. Wolf, Legislature, on Pa. budget package**

That Pennsylvania budget package? It's still a work in progress. Talks fell short Sunday night as Gov. Tom Wolf and his Democratic allies in the legislature turned down a Republican plan of taxes and other revenue raisers designed to fill an $800 million gap in a $32 billion spending... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Guest Column: Inventing in tourism will pay off for Pa.**

Pennsylvania’s legislators are deep in the process of determining how the commonwealth’s taxpayer dollars should be spent in the upcoming budget year. That’s always a challenging and complicated process, but the current budget deficit adds an extra wrinkle. There is one line item that, if better funded, could help make an... - *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*

**PA Budget In Limbo As Monday Night Deadline For Revenue Plan Nears**

The window is closing for a revenue plan to fund Pennsylvania’s new budget. Governor Wolf has until midnight to act on a budget bill passed ten days ago. Governor Wolf has expressed optimism in his public comments since the budget bill was passed June 30th that a plan to pay for it would come in... - *KYW News Radio 1060*

**July 9**

**Letter: Pennsylvania’s leaders letting us down again**

Higher taxes are inevitable as special interests are served. - *Reading Eagle*

**Pennsylvania budget talks hanging on deal on gambling bill**

Pennsylvania’s 8-day-old budget stalemate was hanging Saturday on closed-door negotiations over legislation to authorize another big gambling expansion in the nation's No. 2 commercial casino state, as anti-tax lawmakers hoped for hundreds of millions of dollars from the industry to... - *AP*

**Pennsylvania casino expansion bill could hurt Bethlehem’s and Allentown’s finances**

A gambling expansion bill being brokered in this weekend’s state budget negotiations could cause Bethlehem, Allentown and other cities financial pain in coming years. For months, the Legislature has been trying to fix a piece of the state’s 2004 casino law that the Supreme Court deemed unconstitutional.... - *Allentown Morning Call*
Another down-to-the-wire push to complete Pa. budget
No deal. Both chambers of the Republican-controlled Legislature convened Saturday for rare, mid-summer sessions, but left for the day without an agreement on how to pay for the nearly $32 billion spending plan they passed last week. Although top Republican senators signaled that all sides were close on a... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Our view: Annual budget season more insane than ever
It’s annual “excoriate Harrisburg’s budgeting” season, though this year’s event comes with a new twist: the overpaid powers that be managed to pass a budget on the June 30 deadline, yet conveniently — and, quite frankly, remarkably — agreed to spend $32 million... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

Pennsylvania’s state budget talks continue, with an apparent break in gambling impasse
Elements of a hard-fought compromise package on expanded gambling in Pennsylvania took shape Saturday as lawmakers scrambled to complete a plan to pay for a $32 billion state budget. Legislative leaders, along with Gov. Tom Wolf, are said to be seeking about... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

July 8
Legislature to reconvene today; state budget funding unclear
HARRISBURG -- Legislators began to trickle back into the Capitol, but it remained unclear Friday -- a week into the fiscal year -- how they would finish paying for the state budget. The House met for a few hours Friday, but there was no sign of a revenue package being placed on its voting calendar. The House and Senate are... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pa. lawmakers to work into the weekend to resolve budget
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania lawmakers will return to the Capitol for a rare weekend session as negotiators continue to try for an agreement on how to pay for this year’s nearly $32 billion budget. Both the House and Senate will convene Saturday as they race to figure out... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Pennsylvania budget negotiations stuck on gambling expansion
HARRISBURG, Pa. — Disagreements over expanding casino-style gambling in Pennsylvania remain at the forefront of negotiations over how to patch up state government’s deficit... - AP

Gambling expansion increasing odds against timely budget deal
Midnight Monday. That’s how long the Legislature has to pass and drop on Gov. Tom Wolf’s desk a series of tax, gambling and bond borrowing bills enabling the state to pay for its newly minted $32 billion budget. As of Friday, the odds were increasing that the House and Senate will miss... - Allentown Morning Call

Pennsylvania legislative leaders preparing to place their bets on gambling expansion
Elements of a hard-fought compromise package on expanded gambling in Pennsylvania are starting to take shape as lawmakers struggle to complete a plan to pay for a $32 billion state
budget. Legislative leaders, along with Gov. Tom Wolf, are said to be seeking about... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**July 7**

**Deficit-ridden Pennsylvania warned of another hit to credit**

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania was put on notice Thursday that it faces a new credit downgrade and higher borrowing costs if it does not improve its deficit-ridden finances... - *AP*

**When it comes to state budget, Pennsylvania needs a payment plan**

Pennsylvania's 2017 state budget: The rest of the story We're now into "the rest of the story," with apologies to iconic radio host Paul Harvey, when it comes to the Pennsylvania $32 billion state budget. As in, how do we pay for it? This may interest you because it could make the difference in whether or... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**When it comes to state budget, Pennsylvania needs a payment plan**

Pennsylvania's 2017 state budget: The rest of the story We're now into "the rest of the story," with apologies to iconic radio host Paul Harvey, when it comes to the Pennsylvania $32 billion state budget. As in, how do we pay for it? This may interest you because it could make the difference in whether or... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Paying for the budget is a critical element**

There's an old saying that two things you don’t want to see made are sausage and laws. That might well apply to current efforts in Harrisburg to complete work on a new state budget. Last week, lawmakers approved a $32 billion spending plan for the fiscal year that began June 30, but that’s all it really is, a plan to spend... - *Washington Observer-Reporter*

**Editorial: Pennsylvania needs new approach to balancing budget**

The Issue: A state spending plan has been approved, but it’s not clear where the money is coming from. Our Opinion: Harrisburg desperately needs sustainable solutions to its ongoing fiscal problems. The decision by state lawmakers to approve a spending plan without being... - *Reading Eagle*

**State budget may impact Drake Well**

Pennsylvania’s spending bill, which recently passed the state Senate and House and only awaits the signature of Gov. Tom Wolf, includes a sizable cut for the budget of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, which oversees Drake Well Museum and Park.... - *Titusville Herald*

**‘No agreements’ on how to pay for Pa. budget, GOP House leader says**

HARRISBURG — Where Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati (R., Jefferson) may see a glass half-full when it comes to a deal on how to pay for the state budget, House Majority Leader Dave Reed (R., Indiana) sees an empty glass. In a pointed memo Thursday to Republican members of the House, Reed said... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*
A budget isn’t a budget until you can pay for it - get it done, Harrisburg: Editorial
Recent Pennsylvania budgets have been worthy of criticism, both for timing and substance. And we’ve noted both in the past. This year, we regret to call “shenanigans” once more. Taxpayers should do the same. One often hears that “we wish government would be run like a business.”... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Gaming reform bill stuck in Senate committee as fiscal year draws to a close
While Pennsylvania has a spending plan for the 2017-18 fiscal year, it still is grappling with how to finance it, as well as a $2 billion budget shortfall. Thank you for reading! Please log in, or sign up for a new account and purchase a subscription to continue reading.... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

July 6
House GOP leader: No agreements in Pennsylvania budget talks
The Republican leader in the GOP-controlled Pennsylvania House of Representatives says there haven’t been any agreements reached in a six-day-old budget stalemate over the state’s deficit-ridden finances... - AP

Pennsylvania budget talks drag into Day 5 of fiscal year
HARRISBURG, PA. Negotiators were almost finished writing compromise legislation to expand casino-style gambling in the state, a top senator said Wednesday, as legislative leaders labored in private five days into the fiscal year over how to cover the state government's biggest post-recession shortfall... - AP

Pa. budget talks drag on
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania’s Capitol hallways looked deserted Wednesday, even though the state is nearly a week into the new fiscal year without a complete budget. Budget negotiators on Wednesday said that talks were continuing, but Gov. Wolf and Republicans who control both legislative chambers have yet to... - Philadelphia Inquirer

No deficit of delusion
Facing a legislative election in 2016, state legislative leaders scrupulously avoided the wrath of voters by unscrupulously passing a fraudulent state budget that, they claimed, was “balanced.” Final numbers from the fiscal year that ended June 30 demonstrate the... - Scranton Times

Pennsylvania missed its deadline again, still among 8 states without a budget
Pennsylvania is once again among a select group of states that have missed their most essential deadline. Five days into the new fiscal year, eight states — including the Keystone State — do not yet have budgets in place, according to an update Wednesday from the National Association of State Budget Officers.... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

Pennsylvania’s budget still not finished
Talk about cutting it close. The Legislature’s political party bosses have four days to negotiate
on and then cajole rank-and-file lawmakers into adopting bills that spell out how to pay for the state’s newly approved $32 billion budget. Those rank-and-file lawmakers have been ordered back to Harrisburg at 11 a.m. - Allentown Morning Call

S&P threatens to cut Pa. credit rating
S&P Global Ratings threatened Thursday to cut Pennsylvania’s AA- general-obligation bond rating a notch, which would likely drive up taxpayers’ annual borrowing costs. The “negative credit watch” warning “reflects Pennsylvania’s eroding financial position and... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Gaming reform bill stuck in Senate committee as fiscal year draws to a close
While Pennsylvania has a spending plan for the 2017-18 fiscal year, it still is grappling with how to finance it, as well as a $2 billion budget shortfall. Thank you for reading! Please log in, or sign up for a new account and purchase a subscription to continue reading... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

PA budget includes an extra $45 million for early childhood initiatives
Pennsylvania’s estimated $32 billion budget for 2017-18 includes an extra $45 million for early childhood funding initiatives above previous spending levels. Most of the additional funding will be used to serve more than 3,300 extra students enrolled in prekindergarten programs throughout the state. Plus,... - Levittown Bucks County Courier Times

Time for action
As the state begins a new budget year, it’s time for action to solidify the spending plan. Pennsylvania lawmakers are at a stalemate as the discussions entered the fifth day over paying for a $32 billion budget package. - Somerset Daily

July 5
Clock ticking on $2B search to balance Pennsylvania budget
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) -- The clock is ticking on Pennsylvania lawmakers grappling with the state government’s biggest shortfall since the recession to come up with the $2 billion-plus they say they need to balance a shortfall from the just-ended fiscal year and a projected deficit in the... - AP

Fight over funding budget now under way
A new month has begun, and with it, comes an old story — the battle over a state budget. The state Legislature on Friday sent Gov. Tom Wolf a $32 billion spending plan. Wolf received the bill on the last day of the fiscal year, setting up an early July showdown over how to come up with $2 billion to fund it.... - New Castle News

Pennsylvania budget talks continue as stalemate enters Day 5
HARRISBURG, PA. Pennsylvania lawmakers have no firm timetable to return to Harrisburg as a stalemate enters its fifth day over paying for a $32 billion budget package... - AP
Pennsylvania losing $500K a year with no gas severance tax, report said
As Pennsylvania law makers wrestle with ways to plug a nearly $3 billion structural deficit, the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center released a report that said the state is losing nearly $500 million each year because it does not have a natural gas severance tax.... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

Area lawmakers dispute need for severance tax on natural gas
Some lawmakers disagree about whether Pennsylvania could fill a $500 million revenue void with a severance tax on natural gas as urged by a liberal Harrisburg think tank. Thank you for reading! Please log in, or sign up for a new account and purchase a subscription to... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

Cannibalizing casinos an example of how not to grow jobs and revenue
Most of us have seen economic cannibals in action at local shopping malls and cities, where new Starbucks and Gap stores are built too quickly and too close together to their existing stores. Thus, the new stores don’t gain sales from new customers but instead shift sales from the old store to... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Baer: Pa.’s predictable budget process
Pennsylvania lawmakers are headed back to Harrisburg to pretend to care about your tax dollars and the state’s fiscal future. They should be off on their usual, and sooo well-deserved, extended summer break. Hey, when you’re in session 60 to 70 days each year, you need a couple... - Philadelphia Daily News

Pennsylvania’s budget still not finished
The 4th of July fireworks have come and gone and Pennsylvania still lacks a way to pay for its $32 billion, four-day-old spending plan. Closed-door negotiations are ongoing in the Capitol among the Legislature’s political bosses, their top aides and Gov. Tom Wolf’s... - Allentown Morning Call

State budget’s $100 million more for edNew hope for most dependent
In many cases mentally disabled people who are unable to live on their own end up staying with their parents or legal guardians for most of their lives. But as their parents get older and their ability to provide care diminishes — or as the person’s needs change — they often need to be admitted... - Butler Eagle ucation will bring $3.6 million to Lancaster County schools
Lancaster County school districts will get nearly $3.6 million more combined in basic education funds under the state budget Gov. Tom Wolf and the Legislature agreed to last week. Schools here would see an average 1.9 percent increase over the previous year, according to an analysis of how the $100 million in additional... - DuBois Courier-Express

Pa.’s latest budget: Hold the applause
It is with an uncomfortable sense of déjà vu for Pennsylvanians that state lawmakers, for the second year in a row, extolled a “budget” passed by the Legislature in the 11th hour and sent to
Gov. Tom Wolf — but with no way yet to pay for it. So much for a constitutionally mandated balanced budget.... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**New hope for most dependent**
In many cases mentally disabled people who are unable to live on their own end up staying with their parents or legal guardians for most of their lives. But as their parents get older and their ability to provide care diminishes — or as the person’s needs change — they often need to be admitted... - *Butler Eagle*

**July 2**
**State budget passes**
The Republican state senators representing southwest Pennsylvania backed the House budget plan the Senate approved on Friday even though some of them were not exactly enthusiastic about the deal. “This is the best product we can put together that fills the needs of Pennsylvanians,”... - *Uniontown Herald-Standard*

**Could racehorses come in last in finalizing the 2017-18 state budget?**
As lawmakers barrel down the home stretch of this year’s budget negotiations, some are eyeing a horse-racing fund to help reach the finish line. Raiding some or all of the $250 million Race Horse Development Fund to support the $32 billion spending plan budget the Senate and House approved... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**No budget means no accountability**
June 30 isn’t a moving target. It’s a fixed date on the state calendar, the end of the fiscal year, every year. Yet state legislators can’t seem to pass a budget by that date before heading to the beach, even though the governor’s budget address starts the process each year... - *Scranton Times*

**Tourism marketing worth state’s investment**
Pennsylvania’s legislators are deep in the process of determining how taxpayer dollars should be spent in the upcoming budget year. That’s always a challenging and complicated process, but the current budget deficit adds an extra wrinkle. There is one line item that, if better funded, could help make an... - *Scranton Times*

**Lawmakers: State budget not the best, but ‘the best we can get’**
Lawmakers: State budget not the best, but ‘the best we can get’ - *Beaver County Times*

**Teachers, child advocates hail tentative state budget**
Pennsylvania teachers and a statewide child advocacy group hailed the budget passed Friday by the House and Senate and likely headed for Gov. Tom Wolf’s desk as a win for children. The $32 billion spending plan includes several items considered priorities by those groups, including a $100 million increase for basic education, a... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*
Bipartisan state budget goes to governor’s desk
Pennsylvania has a budget, sort of. The state House and Senate on Friday sent a $31.9 billion spending plan to Gov. Tom Wolf’s desk before the Saturday start of the 2017-18 fiscal year, even if a revenue package to pay for it remains a work in progress. Lawmakers are expected to address revenues next week. The holdup has to do... - *Erie Times-News*

Pennsylvania Legislature OKs $32 billion budget but no way to pay for it
The Pennsylvania Legislature scored a bipartisan touchdown Friday by passing a nearly $32 billion budget for the fiscal year that starts Saturday. But lawmakers passed for now on taking tougher votes on taxes, bond borrowing, gambling expansion and financial transfers that are expected to... - *Allentown Morning Call*

Gordner praises bipartisan effort on spending
HARRISBURG — Local Sen. John R. Gordner, R-Berwick, called the spending plan passed Friday by the Senate a bipartisan and... - *Bloomsburg Press Enterprise*

Wolf gets $32B budget package, awaits plan to pay for it
A budget package that sends more money to Pennsylvania's schools and services for the intellectually disabled while making big savings bets went to the governor’s desk Friday without what some lawmakers called the hardest part: figuring out how to pay for it... - *AP*

Pennsylvania budget: Here's how much money Lehigh Valley school districts will get
The Pennsylvania Legislature passed a nearly $32 billion budget Friday. Schools statewide will see an increase of $100 million in the basic education grant. The chart below shows the breakdown in education funding for Lehigh Valley school districts. - *Allentown Morning Call*

Lawmakers approve state budget without plan to pay for it
With hours to spare before the midnight deadline, the Republican-controlled Legislature on Friday approved a new budget for Pennsylvania, but one missing a critical piece: a plan for how to pay for it. The state House and Senate each overwhelmingly passed a nearly $32 billion... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

June 30
Legislature poised to pass $32B budget
HARRISBURG — The Legislature has teed up a $32 billion state budget for a final vote today even though lawmakers still haven’t figured out how to pay for it. Lawmakers are expected to return to the Capitol after the Fourth of July to complete bills spelling out how to generate more than $2 billion in revenue... - *Sunbury Daily Item*

The Latest: $32B bipartisan spending plan goes to last votes
A $32 billion bipartisan budget package is poised for floor votes in the Pennsylvania Legislature on the final day of the state government’s fiscal year... - *AP*
**Lawmakers prep for budget votes, await plan to pay for it**
Pennsylvania lawmakers will take up a $32 billion bipartisan spending package on the state fiscal year's final day, although lawmakers don't know how it'll be paid for...

- AP

**Senate approves Pa. budget package, but funding piece missing**
HARRISBURG — Gov. Tom Wolf and the Republican-controlled Legislature were on track Friday to get an on-time spending blueprint for Pennsylvania, but one missing a critical piece: a plan for how to pay for it. The state Senate, in a 43-7 vote, approved on Friday morning a nearly $32... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**Highlights of Pennsylvania’s budget agreement**
Highlights of a bipartisan spending plan for Pennsylvania state government's 2017-18 budget year that starts Saturday:...

- AP

**The state budget must protect those in need of human services**
Supporting a loved one living with a disability, an aging parent or a child battling an addiction can bring with it many challenges. Many people in our community are working hard day in and day out to support their families, and while their stories and challenges may differ, they share a common...

- Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

**$32B budget would send more to schools, pensions, disabled**
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania lawmakers were poised to approve a $32 billion compromise budget package unveiled Thursday, the second-to-last day of state government's fiscal year, even though they had no plan to pay for it or handle the state's biggest cash shortfall since the recession...

- AP

**Commissioner Baker letter to legislators expresses concerns about state budget bill**
Indiana County commission chairman Mike Baker on Wednesday shared a copy of a letter he sent this week to the county’s four representatives in the state House, outlining concerns he has about HB218. HB218, passed in April, is the House version of what Pennsylvania’s 2017-18 budget...

- Indiana Gazette

**Pa. Senate plans to go ahead on budget vote despite no plan to pay for it**
HARRISBURG — With the deadline to pass a state budget fast approaching, legislators began voting on a $31.9 billion spending plan late Thursday — even though there was no agreement on how to pay for it. The Senate Appropriations committee approved the spending bill shortly...

- Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**Pennsylvania budget 'deadline' looms**
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania lawmakers are expected to vote Friday on a nearly $32 billion budget for the fiscal year that starts Saturday. But taxpayers won’t learn how they’ll be paying for 2017-18 spending until after the Fourth of July, when the Legislature will tackle...

- Allentown Morning Call
Pennsylvania state lawmakers start chewing into $32 billion, agreed-to budget proposal
Pennsylvania state senators were presented in closed-door party caucuses Thursday with the bones of a $32 billion budget that has been tentatively agreed to by negotiator from the Senate, House and Wolf Administration. While limited in its ambition after a year of poor tax revenue growth, the... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Local lawmakers weigh in on state spending plan
State Sen. Wayne Langerholc Jr. compared his first budget experience in Harrisburg to taking a sip of water from a fire hose. The freshman Republican from Richland Township has spent months as a member of the Appropriations Committee, processing an endless wave of information... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

Lawmakers unveil $32B state budget
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania lawmakers got their first look Thursday at a $32 billion compromise budget package as they plowed through the second-to-last day of state government’s fiscal year without a plan to pay for it or handle the state’s biggest cash shortfall since the... - Altoona Mirror

Senate approves budget package, await plan to pay for it
A $32 billion budget package that sends more money to Pennsylvania's schools and services for the intellectually disabled while making big savings bets shuffled closer to the governor’s desk Friday, although some lawmakers predicted that the hardest part of paying for it has yet to... - AP

Senate Appropriations Committee gives first approval to 2017-18 Pennsylvania state budget
In a strong bipartisan vote, the state Senate Appropriations Committee gave easy approval Thursday night to a $32 billion general fund budget for Pennsylvania’s state government. The 23-3 vote was the first formal step in a legislative itinerary aimed at getting the spending bill to Gov. Tom Wolf's desk by Friday evening, hours... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

15 highlights of what’s in the $32 billion agreed-to state budget plan
The Senate and House will vote Friday on a proposed $32 billion general fund budget for 2017-18 that Republican and Democratic leaders crafted with Gov. Tom Wolf’s administration. It includes some pleasant funding surprises for some and possibly not-so-pleasant ones for others compared to the $31.5 billion spending plan... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Pa. lawmakers on track to approve spending plan on time
HARRISBURG – Gov. Wolf and the Republican-controlled legislature were on track Friday to get an on-time spending blueprint for Pennsylvania, but one missing a critical piece: a plan for how to pay for it. The state Senate, in a 43-7 vote, approved on Friday morning a nearly $32... - Philadelphia Inquirer
Pennsylvania state lawmakers encouraged to increase early childhood education subsidies
Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf has proposed increasing early childhood funding initiatives by roughly $35 million -- but state lawmakers have not said if the additional funding will be included in the estimated $32 billion budget for 2017-18. The governor’s proposal includes about $10 million in additional funding... - Levittown Bucks County Courier Times

Pennsylvania Senate adopts $32 billion budget
One half of the Pennsylvania Legislature has adopted a nearly $32 billion budget for the fiscal year that starts Saturday. The Senate voted 43-7 this morning on the budget, moving it to the House, where it also is expected to pass in a bipartisan fashion before heading to... - Allentown Morning Call

Natural gas drilling tax long overdue
STATE REP. GENE DIGIROLAMO and STEVE STROMAN Pennsylvania’s state budget has been balanced in recent years using one-time revenue sources and creative accounting gimmicks. As Auditor General Eugene DePasquale and Treasurer Joe Torsella recently pointed out, the commonwealth faces a structural budget imbalance of upward of $3... - Levittown Intelligencer

Pa. legislature deciding how much to spend - later how to pay for it
HARRISBURG – With the deadline to pass a state budget fast approaching, legislators began voting on a $31.9 billion spending plan late Thursday — though there was no agreement on how to pay for it. The Senate Appropriations Committee approved the spending bill shortly... - Philadelphia Inquirer

June 29
Pennsylvania’s $3 billion budget gap: How did we get here?
Katie Meyer, Capitol Bureau Chief, WITF HARRISBURG - State lawmakers have made no secret of the fact that next fiscal year’s state budget, which is due Friday, will be a hard one to enact. The commonwealth’s contending with a roughly $3 billion structural deficit,... - York Daily

Pennsylvania budget work likely to drag into new fiscal year
Pennsylvania’s budget package appeared unlikely Wednesday to be finished by the start of the new fiscal year, as anti-tax Republican lawmakers sort through authorizing more borrowing or casino-style gambling to backfill the state's biggest cash shortfall since the recession... - AP

Wolf says he’s open to borrowing to cover ‘one-time’ budget gap
HARRISBURG — Gov. Tom Wolf said Tuesday that state budget talks are going well. The evidence, however, has yet to be seen. Pennsylvania’s new fiscal year starts Saturday, and legislators have yet to say how they will fill a gaping shortfall in the budget for the... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
As budget deadline closes in, 'It's hard to say yes and it's hard to say no when there's actually nothing in front of you,'

Good Thursday Morning, Fellow Seekers. Today is Thursday, June 29, 2017. And, not that anyone's counting, there's a mere 24-ish hours to go before the 2016-17 fiscal year shuffles off this mortal coil and winks out of existence, much like the Phillies' playoff... - Harrisburg Patriot-News (73696/64888)

Pa. state budget may get done this week; tax and revenue package may need extra innings

Gov. Tom Wolf and top legislative leaders voiced optimism Wednesday that a roughly $32 billion budget setting out spending levels for Pennsylvania state government will be completed by the end of the current budget year on Friday. But the tax and revenue package needed to pay for it?... - Harrisburg Patriot-News (73685/64877)

Could Pennsylvania's state pension funds actually help solve the budget deficit?

Could the state's major public sector pension systems - the source of one of Pennsylvania's heaviest cost drivers over the last decade - actually help close the state's budget deficit? There is an idea being floated in the current discussions to try just that.... - Harrisburg Patriot-News (73683/64875)

June 28

DCED head pushes for more economic development funds

Dennis Davin's title alone – secretary of the Department of Community and Economic Development – indicates money is at the root of his professional being. For sufficient community and economic development to occur, funding must be available. But as the Legislature and Gov. Tom Wolf – again – wrestle with... - Washington Observer-Reporter (73354/64627)

Wolf sees budget 'progress;' evidence wanting

HARRISBURG — Gov. Tom Wolf said Tuesday that state budget talks are going well. The evidence, however, has yet to be seen. Pennsylvania's new fiscal year starts Saturday, and legislators have yet to say how they will fill a gaping shortfall in the budget for the... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (73127/64403)

Preserve human services funding in Pa. budget

by Maxwell King & Bob Nelkin They are visiting North Park near their home in the Pittsburgh suburb of McCandless, and they head straight to the playground. Max and Jack Cieply bring the place to life with laughter as they race between swing set and slide. Dad, Zach, manages to find energy at the end of his work day to... - PAT (73192/64468)

June 27

State budget size stymies lawmakers

HARRISBURG – As Pennsylvania lawmakers enter the home stretch of their budget negotiations for 2017-18, they remain stymied by the most basic of questions: How much does the state
actually need to pay its bills? Estimates range from $1.5 billion to $3 billion.... - Sharon Herald (72968/64325)

Pennsylvania budget deadline looms with no clear way to bridge $3 billion deficit
Five days and counting until Friday night's ominous state budget deadline. Expect the Capitol to be mobbed this week with protesters and lobbyists as reporters haunt closed-door meetings where negotiations will focus on spending cuts, taxes, gambling and liquor expansion in the face of the... - Allentown Morning Call (72726/64092)

Letter: State budget proposal bad for public health
Editor: As a public health nurse, much of what I do to protect the community is behind the scenes. Not only do I administer vaccines to at-risk populations, I continually monitor and educate our communities to identify and contain issues before they become threats. Our work is essential to... - Reading Eagle (72838/64201)

More talk, but no Pa. budget deal
HARRISBURG – It's crunch time in the state Capitol. Pennsylvania legislators returned Monday facing a race against the clock to strike a deal on a state budget for the fiscal year that begins this Saturday. Nothing much was moving. Disagreements over how much to expand gambling continue to dominate talks,... - Philadelphia Inquirer (72657/64027)

Budget deadline looms as Pennsylvania lawmakers eye deficit
Pennsylvania lawmakers returned to the Capitol on Monday with five days left to pass an on-time budget and no firm agreements on how to address state government's biggest cash shortfall since the recession... - AP (72734/64099)

Pennsylvania's state budget talks are stuck and video gaming terminals appear to be the dam
Not a lot got done, publicly, on the new state budget Monday and we think we know why: The intense quest to allow slot-machine style video gaming terminals at Pennsylvania's bars, restaurants and private clubs. For the last few days, it seems like movement on the larger budget package... - Harrisburg Patriot-News (72692/64062)

June 26
State budget deadline looms
The beginning of the state's next fiscal year begins Saturday, but the question of whether Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf and the state's Republican-dominated Legislature can get a deal done on a new budget remains. Although the track record has not favored possibility of an agreement by... - Oil City Derrick (72457/63890)

How will state balance budget?
HARRISBURG — Conservative activists say they are disappointed that Republicans aren't using their commanding majorities in the Legislature to more effectively to rein in
spending. Lawmakers are struggling to explain how they will pay for a state budget with less than a week to go until the end of the fiscal year.... - Sharon Herald (72404/63839)

June 25

Video gaming controversy affects proposed state gambling reform

Video gaming controversy affects proposed state gambling reform - Uniontown Herald-
Standard

Cigarettes, gambling and jobs: What you need to know about Pa.’s budget deadline talks

OK Pennsylvania. You did your part to pay for prisons, state universities, a safety net for the poor, that state trooper who just clocked your speed on the interstate. Now, it’s up to your elected representatives to decide how to spend all that largesse, re: your tax dollars. And in some cases, raise some more.... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Pa. needs shale gas tax to fill budget gap | Editorial

Pennsylvania isn’t just facing a monster of a budget deficit, it's plagued by a bankruptcy of ideas on how to tame it. Well, check that -- some ideas are being floated in Harrisburg to close the budget gap, estimated at anywhere from $1.5 billion (to scrape through...

Will the next state budget keep Pennsylvanians safe or solvent?: Ryan Bizzarro

By Ryan Bizzarro I'm having a hard time remaining upbeat about the budget that will steer Pennsylvania for 12 months, beginning July 1.State Rep. Ryan Bizzarro, D-Erie (Pa. House photo) State Rep. Ryan Bizzarro, D-Erie (Pa. House photo) I'm no fan of playing the blame-game, but I'm a big fan of the facts, and...

PA’s GOP-controlled legislature is stuck in budget La La Land

Has Pennsylvania’s Republican-controlled legislature slipped into in a nether world where it no longer is required to balance the state budget? That could explain some of its lazy ideas to close a $1.5 billion deficit. Maybe lawmakers had already checked out when they suggested the state...

Don’t decimate human services in Pennsylvania

They are visiting North Park near their home in McCandless and they head straight to the playground. Max and Jack Cieply bring the place to life with laughter as they race between swing set and slide. Their dad, Zach, manages to find enough energy at the end of his workday to chase after them...

Lawmakers eye gambling revenue, borrowing to balance budget

State legislators will spend the week trying to figure out how they will raise new revenue and close a $1.5 billion deficit before the start of the new fiscal year. Pennsylvania lawmakers have roughly a week to agree on a state budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year, which starts Saturday, and so far no consensus on...

- Erie Times-News
Budget crunch time in Pa.: Better ideas
With the 2017-18 budget's June 30 deadline looming in Harrisburg, what The Associated Press calls growing expectations of a “get-out-of-town budget” don’t bode well for avoiding repeating 2016-17 budget pitfalls, or for taxpayers. As the Commonwealth Foundation says, the 2016-17 budget “was never... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

June 23
Budget money has to come from somewhere
THERE is an indisputable, incontrovertible, absolute horse sense fact about budgets. If there is no money to fund a program, or if you want to add money to a specific category or department, you have to either increase revenue or make a cut somewhere. Those are the rules — no matter how many ways politicians, lobbyists... - Sharon Herald

Advocates worry school boost could get dropped from state budget
HARRISBURG – Education advocates on Thursday said they’re worried that as state lawmakers strain to come up with a balanced budget, they’ll balance the plan by short-changing public schools. The issue looms large because the proposed increase actually just serves to... - New Castle News

Editorial | With election year looming, deal with state budget issues now
Oh, those poor state lawmakers, working under intense pressure figuring out how to spend our money. The General Assembly has proposed a $31.5 billion budget for fiscal year 2017-18, which begins July 1 – but hasn’t figured out how to get to that number. Gov. Tom Wolf has put forth a $32.3 billion proposed budget, and calls the... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

Pre-K funding increase would help York students (column)
In the City of York, where many families struggle to overcome poverty, quality pre-kindergarten fills gaps in learning during those crucial developmental years before kindergarten. For instance, well-known studies show that children from low-income families hear far fewer words than their... - York Daily

Court ruling raises $100 million question: How can Pa. spend drilling riches?
A Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision this week limiting the state’s use of gas drilling revenue could add a $100 million complication to state budget negotiations just a week away from the deadline for coming up with an annual spending plan. The ruling struck down sections of a 2009 law that gave the Legislature the... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Berk County residents could see tax hike in 2018
Berk County taxpayers will likely be forced to take up the slack in the state budget once again. Facing a $1.5 billion budget shortfall, state lawmakers are considering big spending cuts to public programs. And reduced state funding puts added pressure on the county government to provide the same level of services.... - Reading Eagle

June 22
**Cambria County leaders pass resolution in opposition of proposed state budget**
As the deadline approaches for a 2017-18 state budget, the Cambria County commissioners joined those in other area counties in approving a resolution urging legislators against passing the spending plan in its current form. During a regular meeting held Wednesday evening at the Upper Yoder Township... - *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*

**Don’t cut funding for services needed by hardworking families**
There are many families in Bucks County working hard to support a loved one living with a disability, an aging parent, or a child battling an addiction. It could be a child who is diagnosed with schizophrenia or autism or a family trying to get treatment for a heroin addict. While their... - *Levittown Bucks County Courier Times*

**Hey Pa. lawmakers - give working parents the help they deserve: Della Moran & David Lapp**
By Della Moran & David Lapp Today, more than two-thirds of all Pennsylvania families with kids under six have both parents in the workforce, making child care a necessity—and a very expensive one. Yet the state House has proposed a substantial cut to the child care... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Days from the deadline, budget indecision in Pa.**
With less than 10 days to the deadline for a new state budget, there is talk but little action — and even less agreement — on how to close a steep budget deficit and fix the state’s fiscal problems. Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, on Wednesday strongly signaled skepticism over a... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Lawmakers should pass per-capita fee for state police protection: Leslie S. Richards**
By Leslie S. Richards State government faces many tough choices as it works very hard to strike a balance between meeting critical needs and keeping the burden on taxpayers as fair as possible. LESLIE RICHARDS ART.jpgPennDOT Secretary Leslie S. Richards (PennLive file)... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**'I want real revenue, and I want net revenue,' Wolf says as budget deadline closes in:**
**Thursday Morning Coffee**
Good Thursday Morning, Fellow Seekers. With the end of the current fiscal year a scant eight days away, Gov. Tom Wolf is sending some pretty clear signals about what he does (and more importantly) doesn’t want to see in a finished spending plan. Speaking to reporters Wednesday, the York County Democrat didn’t exactly... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**A budget by microwave does Pennsylvania no good**
With just two weeks before the July 1 start of the 2017-18 fiscal year, Pennsylvania lawmakers are running out of time to craft a budget that makes a dent in the state’s $3 billion structural deficit. As The Associated Press reported Monday, years of deficits — driven by sluggish tax... - *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*
Budget dreams unlikely to come true
If you believe in the tooth fairy, the Easter bunny and Santa Claus, then no doubt you expect Pennsylvania lawmakers to agree on a 2017-18 budget that’s balanced, adequately funds education, human services and myriad other essential programs, doesn’t raise taxes, and helps restore the... - Levittown Intelligencer

It’s time for Pa. to stop papering over its budget holes: Frank Dermody
For many years during budget negotiations, Democrats have proposed commonsense solutions like a severance tax on gas drillers and closing corporate tax loopholes, but each year Republicans have resisted. DERMODY ART.jpgState Rep. Frank Dermody, D-Allegheny (Pa. House photo)... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

June 21
Wolf takes dim view of GOP’s budget-balancing strategies
Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf is pouring cold water on leading ideas from Republican lawmakers as time ticks down to balance the state’s deficit-wrecked finances... - AP

No more excuses - it’s time to finish up the state budget:
By Marc Stier Now that the Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, and the Republican-controlled General Assembly have reached a deal to reform public employee pensions, it’s time to get to work on the budget. And, whether you like or don’t like the pension deal (like any compromises... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Pa. can’t afford to roll the dice on another gambling expansion: Scott Petri
By Scott Petri Imagine walking into a restaurant with your family, expecting to enjoy a nice relaxing dining experience, fueling up your car or truck at the gas station/truck stop or stopping by the local convenience store, but instead being bombarded by flashy casino-style electronic betting terminals.... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

June 20
Will the case for a drilling tax finally sink in this year?: Gene DiGirolamo and Steve Stroman
By Gene DiGirolamo and Steve Stroman Pennsylvania's state budget has been balanced in recent years using one-time revenue sources and creative accounting gimmicks. GENE DIGIROLAMO ART.jpgState Rep. Gene DiGirolamo, R-Bucks (Pa. House photo ) As Auditor General Eugene DePasquale and Treasurer Joe Torsella recently... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Pa. state government employees are asking: Is that early retirement offer going to happen?
State employees with at least 29 years of service have been waiting with bated breath for word on whether an early retirement proposal will be part of the 2017-18 budget resolution. Gov. Tom Wolf is the one who put the idea in their heads that such an incentive might be forthcoming when he announced it as part of his February... - Harrisburg Patriot-News
**Pa. Supreme Court rules state forest gas royalty transfers unconstitutional**
The Pennsylvania Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that royalties from oil and gas leases on state forest land must be dedicated to conservation of the Commonwealth’s public natural resources, not used for general budgetary purposes. Article 1, Section 27 of the Constitution, known as the Environmental... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Rumor of $100M cut in education budget rattles fair school funding campaign**
PHOENIXVILLE >> Worried by rumors that the state legislature may cut the additional $100 million planned for K-12 education funding in the state budget, advocates called a press conference Monday to press their point that the money is needed to begin leveling the playing field for... - *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*

**Penn Vet & food supply**
Many Pennsylvanians trust their beloved pets to the care of their veterinarian because they know veterinarians provide compassionate care for companion animals. However, few Pennsylvanians are aware of the role veterinarians play in protecting the food supply.... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**Pennsylvania badly needs new revenue, top Senate Dem says**
HARRISBURG — Senate Democratic leader Jay Costa painted a bleak picture of state finances Monday, predicting that lawmakers and the governor will put Band-Aids on the next two budgets instead of fixing problems by enacting steady revenue increases. Though the June 30 deadline for the next fiscal year's budget is less... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**State university officials push for affordable education**
With the countdown to Pennsylvania’s June 30 budget deadline ticking, faculty and administration officials with the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Monday made their case for boosting college affordability to the state House Democratic Policy Committee.... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**Sharply-split Pa. Supreme Court curtails state’s use of money from Marcellus drilling leases**
Pennsylvania’s legislature and governor can’t divert money from the state’s Oil and Gas Lease Fund for purposes that don’t involve conservation of the environment, the state Supreme Court ruled Tuesday. That decision overturns a Commonwealth Court ruling which dismissed a... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Gov. Tom Wolf says House budget would hurt opioid crisis response**
A Republican-crafted state House budget bill slashed funding for efforts to curb the number of people dying in the worsening drug overdose crisis, members of Gov. Tom Wolf’s administration said Monday. Wolf, a Democrat, put funds in his proposed 2017-18 budget to pay for... - *Reading Eagle*

June 19
Commercial storage tax a sure jobs killer
Gov. Tom Wolf’s plan to remove the sales-and-use tax exemption for commercial storage will have a detrimental effect on consumers, local employers, workers, and the regional economy. Given Pennsylvania’s fragile fiscal recovery, this tax is shortsighted and would bring with it a...

With deficit looming, Pa. lawmakers consider leasing state assets, report: Monday Morning Coffee
Good Thursday Morning, Fellow Seekers. In a scolding missive, former Gov. Ed Rendell has hit back at House Republicans who accused him of spending “frivolously” on "unaccountable handouts" during last summer's Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. In a May 22 letter to House Majority Leader Dave Reed, R-Indiana, and...

Could smokers could help solve another Pa. budget? (And not in the way that you think)
Will Pennsylvania’s elected officials turn to the cigarette to balance one more state budget? Could happen, and this time it’s got nothing to do with cigarette tax rates. Several sources told PennLive last week one strategy under study to get to budget closure without a major tax increase is floating a bond issue...

Pennsylvania lawmakers have a gambling problem
Gambling is the opioid of Harrisburg lawmakers. It comes with all the hallmarks of addiction: compulsive need, increasing tolerance, and the drive to continue to consume despite negative consequences. Lawmakers got their first real taste when they legalized gaming in 2004 and...

State budget process, mandated costs bedevil Pennsylvania schools
It's the same problem, year after year: School districts across the state must adopt budgets for the upcoming school year before knowing how much money they'll receive in state funding. And as mandated costs — programs and services public schools are required to provide according to state and federal laws — continue to...

Desperate budget situation leads to gambling expansion
The state government revenue stream is swimming in red ink, with collections running far below expectations. And it seems operational expenses keep rising. Those increases combine with a looming public pension financial crisis to put Pennsylvania in a desperate budget situation....

Pa. Farm Bureau supports funding for Penn Vet
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and our 62,000 member families call on state lawmakers to support the restoration of funding in the state budget to the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine (Penn Vet). Penn Vet’s work on proper egg handling has nearly eradicated the...
Group worries learning center will close
Local educators and community members assembled earlier this month in Butler County for an emergency planning meeting. Word had surfaced that due to budget cuts, McKeever Environmental Learning Center in Sandy Lake could be closing at the end of the month. "Save McKeever" was created in May after information had spread that... - Oil City Derrick

June 18
DEP secretary: Republican budget proposal puts public health at risk
WILKES-BARRE — The state Department of Environmental Protection warns that cuts to environmental and public health programs in the proposed budget from House Republicans could put air and water quality at risk. In a letter to the chairmen of the House and Senate Environmental Resources... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

A 'get out of town' budget appears inevitable, lawmakers say
HARRISBURG, Pa. Lawmakers faced with Pennsylvania state government's biggest cash shortfall since the recession are bracing for what they call a "get-out-of-town budget." - AP

Funding should be restored to Penn Vet
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and our 62,000 member families call on state lawmakers to support the restoration of funding in the state budget to the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. Penn Vet’s work on proper egg handling has nearly eradicated the... - State College Centre Daily Times

Ed Bechtel: Gov. Wolf’s budget proposal will hurt pharmacies and seniors
According to projections, nearly one-quarter of Pennsylvania's population will be over the age of 65 by 2040. As the commonwealth’s population ages, the role of pharmacists as health care providers becomes ever more essential. Providing medication therapy management, synchronizing... - Allentown Morning Call

June 15
Pay attention to what's happening in Harrisburg
While we are being distracted by the turmoil in Washington, D.C., our Republican-controlled state Legislature is busy drafting and passing legislation that you may never have heard of. Many of the bills proposed by the Republican majority mirror current congressional efforts by brazenly favoring the wealthy and large... - Levittown Intelligencer

June 13
Tom Muller: State House GOP budget harms Lehigh County
This state Republican budget is wrong for the people of Lehigh County As county executive, I have worked hard to better the lives of all the people of Lehigh County. Making the county a place where companies want to do business and where people want to raise their families has always been a... - Allentown Morning Call
**Lebanon’s lawmakers believe budget will be passed on time**
Although the clock is ticking toward the June 30 constitutional deadline, Lebanon County’s state representatives believe the state Legislature will pass a balanced budget on time. Speaking to administrators at the Lebanon County Conservation District on Friday, Rep. Russ Diamond (R-102) and Rep. Frank Ryan (R-101) expressed... - **Lebanon Daily News**

**Major fiscal impacts locally for proposed state budget**
The ballooning, multi-billion-dollar structural state budget deficit is looming again this year. The Clinton County commissioners fear the tough choices our state lawmakers and Gov. Tom Wolf face will fall on the backs of county government in the form of zeroed-out funding for critical... - **Lock Haven Express**

**June 12**
**Editorial: Pa. ready to roll dice on more gambling**
Thank God for the lottery. No, we’re not talking about the Powerball, which is zooming into the stratosphere once again after the jackpot rolled over again Wednesday night. We’re talking about Pennsylvania, which is about to roll the dice – again – as it battles an ocean of red ink.... - **West Chester Daily Local News**

**Delco reps split on expanded gambling in Pa.**
A vote in favor of a massive gambling expansion in Pennsylvania passed the state House of Representatives late Wednesday night by a vote of 102-89. First addressing the need to fix the local share tax issue — in which the local revenue from Harrah’s casino has been crucial to the city of... - **Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times**

**Baer: The ways of Harrisburg are helping (and could hurt) Wolf’s reelection**
The resolution of a new state budget, expected within a few weeks, will lay out a sort of political runway for Gov. Wolf’s reelection bid. The question is: Will it be smooth, or potholed and too short? There are varying views, even among Republican strategists. Some privately... - **Philadelphia Daily News**

**June 9**
**Westmoreland commissioners express frustration over proposed budget cuts**
Westmoreland County commissioners are joining with other counties across Pennsylvania to let their state legislators know they are not happy with the cuts made to their budgets. Commissioner Ted Kopas said Thursday that the state budget that was passed by the House of Representatives shows a cut of approximately $1.3 million... - **Uniontown Herald-Standard**

**Pa. legislature sends Wolf plan to reduce pension costs**
HARRISBURG — After years of wrestling with the issue, Pennsylvania’s Republican-controlled legislature is sending Gov. Tom Wolf legislation to reduce the cost of pensions for state workers and public school teachers. Legislators in the House of Representatives on Thursday followed their... - **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**
Pension fix heading to governor
HARRISBURG — Lawmakers have sent the governor a pension reform bill that outside experts have described as the most impactful reform to a public pension taken by any state in the nation. The state House voted 143-53 on Thursday to shift new workers into three... - Sunbury Daily Item

June 8
Sweeping gambling bill passes Pa. House toward uncertain future
Pennsylvania House lawmakers passed a sweeping gambling expansion Wednesday night that would bring casino-style gambling to airports and bars, as well as regulate online gambling and fantasy sports contests. The 675-page bill passed by a slim 102-89 margin a few hours after it was... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

State treasurer, auditor general issue ominous budget warning
Pennsylvania's two main fiscal watchdogs warned legislators on Wednesday that the state might have to borrow as much as $3 billion to run the government in 2017-18 if structural budget problems are not addressed. “What we saw is not encouraging,” said state Treasurer Joe Torsella... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

Budget crunch: Pa. faces possible $3 billion shortfall
HARRISBURG — And so it begins. It’s budget crunch time in the Pennsylvania Capitol, and the state treasurer and auditor general ratcheted up the normal yearly pressure Wednesday with a warning: The state’s strapped. “If this were a household,” Treasurer Joseph M. Torsella told... - Philadelphia Inquirer

OPED: Wolf budget plan ignores needs of aging citizens
W. Russell McDaid, Pennsylvania Health Care Association. People today need help with clinically complex medical conditions that make even basic care challenging. There’s no denying that as a state, Pennsylvania is getting older. Our commonwealth currently ranks fourth nationally in the percentage of people... - York Dispatch

Early childhood investment helps to prevent crime
Law enforcement leaders know that fighting crime and protecting public safety are paramount, but we also know that everyone benefits if we can prevent crime in the first place. Too often, we see young criminals emerge from dysfunctional families, made even more frustrating because we know... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

State’s veterinary outlay critical
Two years ago, Pennsylvania farmers began to understand the extent of the devastation of America’s worst animal disease outbreak, high pathogenic avian influenza. By June 2015, more than 49.5 million chickens and turkeys were dead. Nearly 2,000 veterinarians, state and federal regulators and contractors helped... - Scranton Times
DePasquale, Torsella warn of Pennsylvania’s low fund balance
When looking at your financial picture, there are things to take into consideration. It isn’t just about how much you make and how much you spend. There’s also how much credit you have and how much you have in savings. Pennsylvania’s top money men said Wednesday that the state’s... - State College Centre Daily Times

June 7
How Pennsylvania school districts are trying to balance the books for next year: By slashing staff, hiking taxes
As Pennsylvania’s school districts prepare to approve final budgets for the 2017-18 school year, many have confronted the need to raise taxes and make cuts to personnel or programs “just to keep their heads above water,” according to a report released Tuesday by the Pennsylvania... - Ellwood City Ledger

Now comes the hard part for the state budget
The state House passed a budget for 2017-18 in early April. It was for $31.5 billion, $800 million less than Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposal of $32.3 billion. Now it’s June and the hard part remains – coming up with a compromise that suits all parties enough to produce a budget by the end of... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Pennsylvania House gears up for huge gambling expansion vote
The Pennsylvania House of Representatives is gearing up for a rushed vote on legislation to expand casino-style gambling to the internet, airports, bars and elsewhere... - AP

Warner introduces performance-based budgeting bill
A bill introduced by state Rep. Ryan Warner that creates a Performance-Based Budget Board and requires state agencies under the governor’s jurisdiction to explain their spending and justify budget requests passed the state House on Tuesday. “We must bring accountability to state government,” said Warner,... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

Pennsylvania public school districts continue to struggle financially, report says
Harrisburg, PA As another school year comes to a close, public school districts across Pennsylvania continue to struggle financially, according to a report released Tuesday. The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, or PASA, and the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials, or PASBO, released... - Reading Eagle

Commissioners oppose HB 218
Blair County commissioners on Tuesday joined a growing chorus of opposition to the 2016-17 state budget proposal outlined in HB218. Voicing concerns similar to ones offered recently by commissioners in neighboring Bedford and Centre counties, Blair County leaders said Tuesday... - Altoona Mirror

School districts reaching a ‘tipping point’ on being able to deliver quality education
The bleak picture painted by a recent statewide survey on the 2017-18 school district budget
outlook looks a lot like ones produced from the same survey done in the past few years. In the 332 school districts that responded to the survey, budgetary challenges are causing seven in 10 districts to look at property tax...

- *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Officials: Pennsylvania may need outside lending help to prop up budget**
Pennsylvania’s state treasurer and auditor general are warning lawmakers that the state government’s worsening long-term deficit may require it to borrow money from an outside lender to prop up routine budgeted operations...

- *AP*

**Chester County Commissioners reject state budget bill citing potential harm to taxpayers**
The Chester County Commissioners on Tuesday adopted a resolution calling for the rejection of a state budget proposal that cuts spending in areas from courts to human services, saying that the fiscal slashing proposed by House Republicans would harm local residents and taxpayers....

- *West Chester Daily Local News*

**Infographic: Declining state funding for free legal services for the poor**
State funding for civil legal services for the poor peaked in 2009. The funding was frozen after 2012, when state lawmakers approved a $200,000 increase in the 2016-17 budget. Another revenue source, surcharges on state court filings, has declined or remained mostly stagnant in recent years....

- *Levittown Intelligencer*

**June 6**
**Budget-crunh carnival sounds fill Pennsylvania Capitol rotunda**
Bellowing and bowling echo during budget season in the Pennsylvania Capitol. Roaring crowds, merchandise stands and a bowling alley. It may sound like a carnival, but it's just spring budget season in the state Capitol. An estimated 600 protesters escaped pouring rain and crowded the Capitol...

- *Allentown Morning Call*

**Democrats Try To Slow Fast-Trackerd Pennsylvania Pension Reform Bill**
The latest version of a public pension reform bill passed the state Senate Monday, and is expected to get a vote in the House later this week. But Democrats in the state House are trying to slow the train down. In an effort to rein in spiraling pension liability for teachers and state...

- *KYW News Radio 1060*

**June 5**
**Guest Column: Nobody gets a ‘free ride’ from state police**
Let’s start by getting one thing straight: State police coverage is not free for anyone in Pennsylvania. Gov. Wolf recently proposed a new $25 tax on every Pennsylvanian who lives in an area without a full-time local police force. State Rep. Mike Sturla, D-Lancaster, has introduced similar legislation in the House of...

- *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*

**State senate launches new effort to overhaul pension benefits**
The Pennsylvania state Senate began advancing legislation Sunday night in the latest Republican effort to overhaul retirement benefits in Pennsylvania’s two big debt-saddled public pension
systems. The bill passed a committee vote on a near-party line basis in the... - *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*

**Estimated 500 gather in Harrisburg to rally for a “budget that puts people first”**
With the June 30 state budget deadline fast approaching, an estimated 500 people from all corners of the commonwealth filtered into the Capitol Rotunda Monday afternoon to advocate for a budget that "puts the people first." The rally, organized by Pennsylvania’s Choice, was backed by 35 special... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Sands Bethlehem casino waging ad war against tavern gambling**
Just two weeks after the $1.3 billion sale of Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem collapsed under the threat that Pennsylvania may allow casino gambling in bars, Sands is launching a million-dollar campaign to stop the legislation behind it. Sands this week is beginning a statewide ad war against proposed House... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**Editorial: Schools take on fight for fair funding in Pa.**
The Pottstown School District in Montgomery County and Southeast Delco in Delaware County are just two examples of the inequity in school funding in Pennsylvania. In an issue that won’t go away, officials, staff and even students in those districts are becoming increasingly frustrated and are... - *West Chester Daily Local News*

**Video slots a long shot to get added to gaming bill**
While the current version of state gaming expansion legislation doesn’t include video slots for social clubs and taverns, the door to bar-based gambling may not be completely closed. With the state facing a $1.2 billion budget shortfall, the video slots remain the wild card that offers the biggest potential payday, said state... - *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*

**June 4**

**Wolf hopeful on budget, snow money**
Less than a month before the state needs a new budget, Gov. Tom Wolf expressed optimism for getting it done on time, despite a projection showing a $1.1 billion shortfall for the current fiscal year. Wolf also discussed his appeal Friday of President Donald Trump’s... - *Scranton Times*

**Pennsylvania cannot have a dysfunctional DEP**
As I watched Patrick McDonnell’s confirmation hearing to become secretary of the state Department of Environmental Protection last month, I was struck by the number of senators who were concerned about the DEP’s ability to carry out its mission. Senators raised questions about its... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Key issues in Pennsylvania’s state budget battle**
Gov. Tom Wolf and state lawmakers hold different ideas on key spending priorities. And the June 30 deadline is drawing closer. - *Reading Eagle*

**June 2**
Pa. State Senate schedules Sunday committee meeting to take up a new pension reform effort
Pension reform is officially back on the table in the Pennsylvania Legislature. The state Senate Appropriations Committee has scheduled a meeting for Sunday evening to amend in proposed language of a long-sought reform to the state’s major public employee pension plans.... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

Delco officials call on state to adequately fund public schools
William Penn Schools Superintendent Jane Harbert says she lies awake at night grappling with a teacher’s complaint that the duct tape binding classroom books is failing. Rose Tree Media Superintendent James Wigo says the only time state legislators will care is when wealthier districts reach... - *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*

Resolution drafted to fight state cuts
The resolution will be sent to the Mifflin County legislative delegation, Gov. Tom Wolf and to the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. Chairman of the Board Kevin Kodish read the resolution during the commissioners public meeting Thursday. Kodish said HB218 contains sweeping cuts in funding for criminal... - *Lewistown Sentinel*

COLUMNS: State gets great return on investment with support of Penn Vet
Two years ago, Pennsylvania farmers were just beginning to understand the extent of the devastation of America’s worst animal disease outbreak, high pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). In winter and early spring of 2015, the midwestern United States was infected with HPAI. By June 2015, more than 49.5 million chickens and... - *Meadville Tribune*

June 1
Local representatives respond to commissioners’ budgetary criticisms
State Reps. Jeff Pyle and Donna Oberlander defend HB218 In recent weeks, the Armstrong County Board of Commissioners have made known their displeasure with cuts in the fiscal year 2018 budget passed by the State House of Representatives – and representatives serving the... - *Kittanning Leader-Times*

COLUMNS: Wolf’s state police tax discriminates against rural Pennsylvanians
Let’s start by getting one thing straight: Pennsylvania State Police coverage is not free for anyone. Gov. Tom Wolf recently proposed a new $25 tax on every Pennsylvanian who lives in an area without a full-time local police force. State Rep. Mike Sturla has introduced similar legislation. Although the governor and... - *Meadville Tribune*

John Baer: Oh, Pennsylvania, please prove me wrong
As we rush into June toward another state budget due by July 1, prospects for an on-time resolution that actually addresses the many needs of our commonwealth remain, at least to me, dim. Not saying an on-time budget’s impossible. Just last week, House Speaker Mike Turzai said, “I think we’re... - *Philadelphia Daily News*
May 31

**HB218 and property taxes**
I attended state Rep. Garth Everett’s recent Town Hall meeting. There were people in attendance who were concerned about property taxes. I said the Pennsylvania Republican Budget (HB218) would result in an increase in property taxes. Mr. Everett thought I may have confused the federal budget with the state... - *Lock Haven Express*

**Midstate DAs call for more funding for child abuse prevention programs**
Cumberland County District Attorney, David Freed, along with district attorneys, lawmakers and child abuse prevention advocates from across Pennsylvania gathered Tuesday in Harrisburg to advocate for more funding for a program aimed at reducing child abuse and subsequent crime.... - *Carlisle Sentinel*

**School superintendents coordinate to plead for state funding help**
The ability to educate public school students is increasingly hampered by spiraling mandated costs for pensions, special education and charter and cyber schools, which dwarf the size of modest funding increases anticipated from the state, according to a group of Western Pennsylvania school... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

May 30

**Pa. budget outlook adds to probation dept. problems**
If major state budget cuts to Franklin County's probation department come to fruition, it would further squeeze an agency already fighting for money and losing staff. Of the $16 million House budget cut proposed for adult probation departments across the state, the county would lose about $600,000.... - *Chambersburg Public Opinion*

**State budget still lacking responsibility**
The most daunting question hanging over Pennsylvania’s 2017-18 state budget deliberations is whether, at this time next year, the commonwealth’s fiscal shortfall will be close to or exceeding $4 billion. The shortfall estimate was $3 billion in early February when Gov. Tom Wolf... - *Altoona Mirror*

**Don’t scold school districts that are trying to be fiscally responsible**
JOHN BAER’S opinion piece on school fund balances leaves out some critical details. He criticizes the $4.4 billion in reserve for fiscal year 2015-16. However, he fails to mention reasons why districts need reserves in place. For example, district pension costs have increased 337 percent since... - *Philadelphia Daily News*

May 26

**Offer casinos can’t refuse**
Pennsylvania casinos are about to learn how it feels to play against the house. In the most brazen gambling power play since Michael Corleone forced Moe Greene out of Las Vegas, the state Senate has voted to give casinos the “opportunity” to pony up $10 million each for new licenses — or... - *Scranton Times*
State funding for Penn’s Vet school keeps us all healthy: Christian Herr
By Christian Herr  Two years ago, Pennsylvania farmers were just beginning to understand the extent of the devastation of America’s worst animal disease outbreak, high pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). In winter and early spring of 2015, the midwestern United States was infected with HPAI.... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

Gas industry, drug abuse among town hall topics
MARK NANCE/Sun-Gazette  Charles Hall, legislative aide for state Rep. Garth Everett, R-Muncy, hands out copies of the state budget information during a town hall meeting at the Unityville Volunteer Fire Co. Thursday. UNITYVILLE — Recent legislation, the status of the drilling industry... - *Williamsport Sun-Gazette*

May 25
**Pa. Senate advances sweeping online gambling expansion**
The state Senate passed a sweeping gambling expansion bill Wednesday that’s projected to generate between $109 million and $147 million in new revenue amid a growing deficit. Fantasy contests, online gaming and tablets at airports are a few of the key components of HB271, which was amended by the Senate on its... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Pennsylvania Senate OKs internet play for casinos, lottery**
Legislation to allow an expansion of casino-style gambling and lottery play to the internet in Pennsylvania passed the state Senate on Wednesday, as lawmakers look for ways to heal the state’s deficit-ridden finances by capturing new and younger gamblers... - *AP*

**Pa. Senate gives green light to internet gaming**
Legislation that could pave the way for gamblers to wager online, buy lottery tickets over the internet and play fantasy sports from the comfort of home or while waiting at the airport cleared the state Senate on Wednesday. In addition to expanding gambling, it would keep millions of dollars... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**Pennsylvania Senate OKs internet play for casinos, lottery**
Legislation to allow an expansion of casino-style gambling and lottery play to the internet in Pennsylvania passed the state Senate on Wednesday, as lawmakers look for ways to heal the state’s deficit-ridden finances by capturing new and younger gamblers... - *AP*

May 24
**Time to expand assisted living**
The Pennsylvania General Assembly’s nonpartisan Independent Fiscal Office recently released a report on the anticipated state budget deficit over the next two years. It’s not a pretty picture, anticipating a $3 billion shortfall. One of the major expenditures in each year’s budget is the Medicaid... - *Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald*
State Sen. Mensch paints a dark picture for budget resolution
If you’re looking for good news about Pennsylvania’s budget, you might want to avoid speaking with state Sen. Robert Mensch, R-24th Dist. Mensch was at the Upper Pottsgrove Commissioners meeting recently and he forecast some hard choices for legislators and Gov. Tom Wolf in the coming... - Pottstown Mercury

Bedford leaders question GOP budget
The Bedford County commissioners on Tuesday publicly questioned the budget passed by the state House, arguing that planned funding cuts would hamper the county’s ability to provide services. In a resolution at their Tuesday meeting, the commissioners took a firm... - Altoona Mirror

South Side school tax increase carries state echoes with it
The South Williamsport Area School Board has given preliminary approval of a .65-mill real estate tax increase in its 2017-18 preliminary budget, which is above its Act 1 index of 0.5 mills. But those are just numbers. The mixture of misgivings and frustration that... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Legislature should hear Wolf’s call on gas tax
Natural gas production in Pennsylvania amounted to a record 5.1 trillion cubic feet in 2016, keeping the commonwealth as second only to Texas as a gas producer. The industry achieved the record even though the number of new wells in 2016 declined for the third consecutive year, according to state data. The... - Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald

May 23
Rent-a-trooper: Could contracting state police patrols fix Pa.’s budget woes?
State police funding is top of mind for the Legislature this year. For years, Pennsylvania dipped into the Motor License Fund to subsidize patrols in communities without local police. In 2016, the state police responded to more than 100,000 incidents outside of its primary patrol... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Trump’s proposed budget cuts stirring alarm
Health-care advocates predicted devastating consequences for the elderly — and their caregivers, often adult children — as they awaited a budget proposal from President Trump that’s expected to slash billions of dollars in aid to health and social-service programs.... - Philadelphia Inquirer

How state funds public education focus of protest in Reading
Reading, PA About 20 people, including advocates for the local Latino community, protested Monday against the way the state funds public education. The demonstrators charge that poorer and predominantly minority urban districts like the Reading School District are short-changed.... - Reading Eagle
Spending on at-risk families pays long-term dividends
The 2017-18 Pennsylvania state budget plan proposes additional investments in our most vulnerable children and families. We in law enforcement support this proposal for its future crime prevention impact. This proposal is a $9 million expansion for evidence-based, voluntary home... - Levittown Intelligencer

May 19
State needs to fund hunger program
The state’s current fiscal situation is downright scary. The latest projections have the state facing a budget shortfall of more than $1 billion for the fiscal year that ends June 30. No one envies our elected leaders who have to solve the problem. Just like no one envies the family that has to sit down each night to an... - Washington Observer-Reporter

75¢ Commissioners voice opposition to state budget cuts
The Pennsylvania budget for fiscal year 2018 has gone from the State House of Representatives to the State Senate, where it currently awaits a vote, and the Armstrong County Board of Commissioners on Thursday formally opposed planned cuts in the budget. - Kittanning Leader-Times

‘In the throes of this crisis, what we desperately need is treatment beds,’ Cumberland County DA Freed says
CARLISLE -- Dave Freed’s day starts with a rundown of the carnage from the night before. In Lower Allen Township, a 17-year-old and 19-year-old have gotten into a fight for the oldest of all reasons: the attentions of a young lady. One didn't like the other giving her the eye. The lizard part of their... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

May 18
As residents get older, state debt gets worse
A recent column by Marc Levy on how Pennsylvania's budget woes will deepen with an aging population was well-written and made many salient points. My wife and I are both retired. We both receive Social Security, and I receive a pension from my previous employment. Because of our age, both of us have... - Levittown Intelligencer

Medicaid & state budget
The General Assembly's nonpartisan Independent Fiscal Office released a report on the anticipated state budget deficit over the next two years. It's not pretty, anticipating a $3 billion shortfall. One of the major expenditures is the Medicaid program, accounting for nearly 23 percent of... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

May 17
Centre officials pass resolution opposing state funding cuts
The state has proposed $782,460 in funding cuts to key services in Centre County, and the commissioners are not happy. During the Tuesday, May 16 meeting of the Centre County Board
of Commissioners, a resolution was unanimously approved to oppose these cuts... - Lock Haven Express

Wolf plane repair tax irks some airports
HARRISBURG — Since Pennsylvania eliminated a sales tax on aviation repairs in 2014, the number of planes based at Pennsylvania airports has increased 36 percent, topping 4,500. Now, there’s a possibility the state might reinstitute that tax as part of Gov. Tom Wolf’s plan to balance his budget with a series of business taxes.... - Meadville Tribune

Pa. Gov. Tom Wolf criticizes Trump’s approach to fighting opioid crisis
Harrisburg, PA Gov. Tom Wolf on Tuesday expressed dire concern over positions taken by President Donald Trump’s administration that Wolf said would jeopardize the response to the growing opioid-fueled overdose crisis. Wolf said he wrote a letter to White House senior adviser Jared Kushner in... - Reading Eagle

Letters to the Editor 5/17/2017 - Letters
Editor: The Pennsylvania General Assembly’s nonpartisan Independent Fiscal Office recently released a report on the anticipated state budget deficit over the next two years. It’s not a pretty picture, anticipating a $3 billion shortfall. One of the major expenditures in each year’s budget is the Medicaid... - Scranton Times

May 15
Pennsylvania Democrats in Levittown to speak out against House Bill 218
County Commissioner Diane Ellis-Marseglia and the Pennsylvania Democratic Party have big problems with HB218 — the House Republican budget proposal — going as far as to call it “immoral.” Marseglia and Marcel Groen, the chairman of the Pennsylvania Democratic... - Levittown Intelligencer

Commissioners Hope to Be Proactive in Anticipation of State Funding Cuts
The Centre County Board of Commissioners discussed the 2017-18 proposed state budget at its May 9 meeting. The commissioners also reported out on the latest possible cuts in state funding using HB218, the House of Representative’s proposed budget for 2017-2018 passed April 4, as a... - State College News

State officials defend tax for state police service
Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget and transportation secretaries defended a plan to tax local governments without police departments as a reasonable solution, arguing that the proposed fee is far less than the cost to state police to provide the service. Wolf has proposed a $25 per capita fee on communities that don’t have... - Meadville Tribune

Wolf plane repair tax irks airports
Since Pennsylvania eliminated a sales tax on aviation repairs in 2014, the number of planes based at Pennsylvania has increased 36 percent, topping 4,500. Now, there’s a possibility the
state might reinstitute that tax as part of Gov. Tom Wolf’s plan to balance his budget with a series of business... - New Castle News

May 14
**State pension debt won’t magically vanish**
As a longtime public servant on the House Appropriations Committee, I have worked to remind legislators about the unshakeable truth behind the numbers related to proposed policy changes. But as the pension reform conversation for teachers and state employees is... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

May 12
**$25 Pennsylvania state police fee would not come with more police coverage**
In Lancaster County, 17 municipalities in the south and east primarily rely on the Pennsylvania State Police for coverage. Two municipalities use the state police part-time and 41 others primarily use local police departments. Townships and boroughs that may be required to begin paying a... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

**Uncertainty threatens impact of possible tax increase in CASD**
CHAMBERSBURG - Blame Harrisburg politicians for the need to raise school real estate taxes, education advocate Susan Spicka told the small crowd at a Chambersburg Area School District board meeting this week. Spicka, also a board member in Shippensburg, addressed the CASD board just... - Chambersburg Public Opinion

May 11
**Tax hike not first answer to state budget shortfall**
Seven weeks before the state budget deadline, Pennsylvania’s ledger sheet gets scarier looking by the day. The state Department of Revenue is reporting a budget shortfall of $1 billion through the first 10 months of the current fiscal year. That’s a 4-percent shortfall, the largest in a... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

**Naloxone funding in jeopardy, House bill 218 cuts funding for Naloxone, Opioid overdose reversing drug faces funding cut**
The Republican state House spending bill passed in April threatens funding that equips first responders with the life-saving opioid overdose reversal drug Naloxone. The bill, which passed the Republican-majority House with a strong party-line vote of 114-84, eliminates $10 million of funding for the drug... - State College Centre Daily Times

**State funding gaps threaten crisis in child care businesses**
By JENNIFER LAPP Not many businesses can clear only $100 a month and survive. When this business is providing a necessary service that drives the local economy, its loss could be disastrous for everyone. - Somerset Daily

**State Rep. Scott Petri talks state budget at Upper Makefield town hall**
A deeper dive into the mechanics of the state budget is sorely needed to find more effective
ways to save money, state Rep. Scott Petri said Wednesday night. During a two-hour presentation on Gov. Tom Wolf’s 2017-18 budget proposal at Upper Makefield Fire Co., Petri said fund transfers and other accounting... - *Levittown Bucks County Courier Times*

**May 10**

**Letter: Veterinary school needs state funding**
Editor: Many Pennsylvanians trust their beloved pets to the care of their local veterinarian because they know veterinarians provide compassionate care for companion animals. However, fewer are aware of the important role veterinarians play in protecting the food supply and supporting public... - *Reading Eagle*

**Pennsylvania’s fiscal realities of Medicaid**
Seth Grove The cost structure of Medicaid is unaffordable for Pennsylvania if left unchecked. The numbers don’t lie. $11.9 billion is the Department of Human Services approved budget for this fiscal year. $224 million is how much Pennsylvania’s Department of Human... - *York Daily*

**Market Pennsylvania: Don’t cut the tourism promotion budget**
Pennsylvania’s legislators, like many of their counterparts across the country, are deep in the process of determining how the state’s taxpayer dollars should be spent in the upcoming budget year. In adjudging the state’s fiscal course, I urge lawmakers to draw a distinction... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Subsidizing horse racing: Time to end fund’s run**
With Pennsylvania's fiscal shortfall perhaps topping $1 billion, the GOP-controlled House’s budget would eliminate $56 million-plus in corporate welfare from general fund spending. But with overall corporate-welfare spending at $800 million, cuts also should be made beyond the general fund.... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**May 9**

**Pa.’s investment in preschool lags behind other states, study shows**
Advocates pushing for an increase in state funding for preschool programs in the 2017-18 state budget released a study on Monday that shows Pennsylvania's investment in pre-K programs is lagging behind other states. It shows 19 states and the District of Columbia have a higher per-capita... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Wolf pushes for increase in Pre-K funding**
Gov. Tom Wolf was joined by advocates for early childhood education Monday to defend his plan to boost Pre-K funding by $75 million. Wolf’s budget proposals include $2 billion in cuts where he thinks the state government can manage them. But, he stressed Monday, he thinks the... - *NC NEW*

**Pennsylvania tech sector rallies against proposed tax**
In an attempt to help close a $3 billion deficit in the state’s 2017-18 budget, Gov. Tom Wolf has proposed a computer services tax on Pennsylvania’s technology sector. The proposal, informally
known as the Pennsylvania “tech tax,” would eliminate sales and use tax exemptions for computer services, along... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

May 8
**Editorial: Demand state change school funding inequities**
Brandt reported on two recent studies which analyzed school funding under the current application of the so-called fair funding formula. The results paint a startling picture of discrimination. Not only were poorer districts getting less than their fair share, the less... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

**Pa. House Republican bill cuts funding to criminal justice services**
In April, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed a trimmed-down budget bill, which would, among other cuts, eliminate from Centre County about $500,000 in criminal justice system funding if it were to become law. The House passed the GOP bill 114-84 along strong party lines. All 80... - State College Centre Daily Times

**Pa.’s budget woes will deepen with aging population**
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) -- Pennsylvania state government is facing perhaps its most difficult budget dilemma since the recession, and demographic trends will provide no relief in coming years... - AP

**Expanded gambling won’t solve budget**
As Pennsylvania inches closer to allowing its casinos and the state lottery to take their games online, the obvious question becomes whether those new revenue sources would make a significant-enough dent in the commonwealth’s projected $3 billion shortfall to make that move wise.... - Altoona Mirror

**Senate reluctant to roll dice on gambling expansion**
While the governor and state House members have floated budget plans, the members of the state Senate aren’t saying much as they grapple with a $1.2 billion deficit ahead of the June 30 budget deadline. Gov. Tom Wolf proposed a $32.2 billion budget in February, relying on a... - New Castle News

**Time for lawmakers to face reality about Pa. budget**
State legislators facing re-election in 2016 passed a farcical state budget to avoid a tax increase, and declared victory. The result is that the budget will end the fiscal year in June more than $1 billion short of its constitutionally required balance, thus driving the accumulated state... - Wilkes-Barre Citizens’ Voice

May 5
**County: State budget hurts Lebanon’s neediest**
A budget passed by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives would cost Lebanon County about $1 million, county commissioners said Thursday because of cuts to criminal justice and

**Don’t skimp, lawmakers - funding for tourism marketing is critical: Roger Dow**
Pennsylvania's legislators, like many of their counterparts across the country, are currently deep in the process of determining how the state’s taxpayer dollars should be spent in the upcoming budget year. Safekeeping the public’s money is, of course, critical. But in adjudging... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

**PEMA concerned that cuts would compromise service**
The director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency complained this week that cuts contained in a proposed budget from state House Republicans would compromise the agency’s mission. Blair County Emergency Management Director Mark Taylor agrees. State Rep. John McGinnis, R-Altoona, does not.... - Altoona Mirror

**Funding for veterinary school is critical**
Many Pennsylvanians entrust their beloved pets to the care of their local veterinarian because they know veterinarians provide compassionate care for companion animals. However, fewer Pennsylvanians are aware of the important role veterinarians play in protecting the food supply and supporting public... - Levittown Bucks County Courier Times

**May 4**
**Elk County agencies talk state funding cuts, fear impacts**
HB218, the proposed 2017-18 state budget, has passed and moved onward to the Senate, making many agencies fearful of the damage it will leave in its wake. The proposal contains sweeping cuts in funding for human services, criminal justice, and administrative programs that counties perform on the... - DuBois Courier-Express

**May 3**
**Pennsylvania budget picture: new revenue estimates show big gaps ahead**
Gov. Tom Wolf and state legislative leaders most assuredly have different ways to do it, but one way or another they will likely have to close a budget hole approaching $1.5 billion as they set tax and spending plans for 2017-18. That picture clarified a bit more Tuesday, as the state’s Independent... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

**Pennsylvania faces $1.2B budget hole this year; April tax collections fall short by $537M**
Pennsylvania’s bank account got another round of bad news this week when the state Department of Revenue reported bringing in $537 million less than expected for the month of April. The latest figures mean the state’s general fund is now $1.2 billion below estimate for the fiscal year that ends June 30.... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

**Pennsylvania’s deficit growing as fiscal year winds down**
Last year, Gov. Tom Wolf and legislative leaders balanced the state's budget by assuming new revenue from a stronger economy and additional spending on alcohol, gambling and
tobacco. But the proverbial smoke in those backroom negotiations must have clouded visions.... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**Singing the budget blues**
Top lawmakers on both sides of the aisle in Washington, along with the White House, apparently are all on the same page on a budget plan that will keep the federal government funded through September. Democrats are chortling over the concessions the Trump administration was forced to make... - *Levittown Bucks County Courier Times*

**Pre-K investments worthwhile**
Blair County is our home, and we love it. The scenery is lush. Our industries helped shape a nation. The people are generous and full of community spirit. With all these blessings, opportunity abounds, but not for everyone. Too many of our young children have been denied the chance to enjoy... - *Altoona Mirror*

**May 2**
**2016 apparently not a banner year for enough Pennsylvanians; state tax revenues sag again**
Now that we've all filed our tax returns, the still-forming 2017-18 state budget picture is officially, 10-figures bleak. Pennsylvania's revenue collections missed their target by about $500 million in April, according to state Department of Revenue figures, blowing... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Pennsylvania sees biggest shortfall since recession**
Pennsylvania is heading into the 2017 budget season with its biggest revenue shortfall since the recession... - *AP*

**May 1**
**Changes to Pennsylvania State Police funding conceivable**
Making money and finding funding is a hot topic at all levels of government. In the state of Pennsylvania there have been significant conversations about the Motor License Fund. According to the fund, money from gasoline and other fuel taxes, vehicle registration fees and license taxes, are put into the fund for the... - *Lewistown Sentinel*

**EDITORIAL: Last call for state liquor control in Pa.?**
Is it last call for Pennsylvania's booze monopoly? Slowly but surely, the Keystone State is doing what so many other states already do -- listen to their citizens when it comes to common-sense rules and regulations on the sale of beer, wine and spirits. Gone are the days of going up to the counter and informing a prickly clerk... - *Pottstown Mercury*

**Crawford County schools preparing for state transportation cut possibility**
With Crawford County's three school district's working to whittle down varying budget deficits for the 2017-18 school year, the announcement that the state may try to raise its revenue by
cutting funding for school busing has been hard for local school officials to swallow.... - *Meadville Tribune*

**April tax collections bring more bad news for Pennsylvania**
April's tax collections are delivering another blow to an already grim fiscal picture for Pennsylvania state government... - *AP*

**Editorial | For our kids, let’s resist the urge to roll the dice again on gambling**
Pennsylvania’s government is addicted to gambling, and wants our kids to have the same experience. The state is again considering turning that direction for revenue in the face of tax shortfalls and growing costs for state programs. We urge state lawmakers to avoid the urge to roll the dice on grabbing... - *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*

**April 30**
**Lee Chizmar: Support Gov. Wolf’s plan to increase funds for school breakfasts**
Nine years ago I was proud to return to my hometown of Allentown, so my wife Erin and I could open our farm-to-table restaurant, Bolete in Bethlehem. We feel deeply engaged in our community and it has been an amazing experience working with local farms like Wild Fox Farms, Liberty... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**Budget addiction to LCB’s post-tax cash keeps wine and liquor sales in government hands**
With one eye on the state budget and another on his own political future, House Speaker Mike Turzai is pushing a series of bills aimed at dismantling and selling the state-owned liquor system. Again. Turzai, an Allegheny County Republican, has made liquor privatization a... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**April 28**
**Rep. Scott Petri lays out what’s on chopping block in state budget**
Pennsylvania pension reform and the challenges of balancing a state budget that meets the needs of the commonwealth were among the hot button topics state Rep. Scott Petri addressed at a town hall meeting Wednesday. About 20 people attended the meeting that Petri, a Republican, held at the... - *Levittown Intelligencer*

**Wagner: Zero accountability is status quo in state (column)**
Every day presents another example of the status-quo culture that continues to consume Harrisburg – a culture that embraces a mindset involving no common sense and no care in the world about how your hard-earned tax dollars are spent. This week, I learned from a York County municipality that because of state... - *York Daily*
**Grove: Pa. needs liquor privatization funds for GOP budget plan**
HARRISBURG — A House Republican from York County says lawmakers should be working to improve customer convenience for Pennsylvanians who want to buy alcohol — and the best way to do that is for the state government to get out of the wholesale booze business... - *AP*
**State bill slows down Gov. Tom Wolf’s consolidation plan**
A Bucks County state representative wants to put the brakes on Governor Tom Wolf’s proposal to consolidate four health-related departments. The House Human Services Committee approved Wednesday by a 14-13 margin a bill introduced by Rep. Gene DiGirolamo, R-18, Bensalem, that prohibits the... - *Levittown Intelligencer*

**April 27**
**Washington County authority concerned over funding cuts**
Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington was welcomed to Charleroi this week by local officials and public figures who applauded what Councilman Larry M. Celaschi called “all they have done and continue to do in helping to make Charleroi a better place.”... - *Uniontown Herald-Standard*

**Guest Column: It’s time to invest in schools**
By April of each year, many parents throughout southeastern Pennsylvania are budget and event planning experts. Spring break trips have been booked, child care plans for out-of-school days have been arranged, summer camp enrollments have been solidified and vacation requests for spring and... - *Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times*

**Commissioners oppose H.B. 218 that would cut state funding**
Clearfield County Commissioners passed a resolution on Tuesday opposing HB218, which was passed by the state House of Representatives earlier this month and forwarded to the Senate. At the commissioner’s meeting, Clearfield County Community Development Specialist Lisa Kovalick presented the effects of the proposed bill on the... - *DUB*

**April 26**
**State House lawmakers prepare to act if federal ban on legalized sports betting is lifted**
HARRISBURG — House lawmakers want to be ready to act if a widespread federal ban on legalized sports betting is lifted anytime soon. The Gaming Oversight Committee approved legislation Tuesday to allow casinos to offer patrons betting on sports games depending on future... - *Scranton Times*

**April 25**
**Budget proposal would charge towns for using state police**
Nearly half of Pennsylvania’s 2,561 municipalities receive what state Rep. Mike Sturla refers to as “free police coverage” from the state police in lieu of using their own police forces. On Tuesday Sturla, D-96 of Lancaster, said he’ll introduce a bill in the House that will ask the residents of those communities to fork over a... - *Pottstown Mercury*

**April 24**
**The state budget**
It’s budget season in Harrisburg. The House has passed its version (HB218) of the 2017-2018 budget and sent it to the Senate. This is the time of year that we taxpayers should be paying
close attention because of the impact the final bill will have on our wallets or the services we depend... - *Lock Haven Express*

**April 23**

**Pennsylvania eyes leap to internet for casinos, lottery**

Facing huge deficits, Pennsylvania could become the first state to allow both its casinos and lottery to take its games online in a quest for money from new and younger players... - *AP*

**Growing wealth in the Commonwealth**

There isn’t much agreement in Harrisburg when it comes to Pennsylvania’s budget. The budget cycle two years ago yielded an epic battle that dragged on nine months past the deadline, and this year the dispute is how big the gap will be between what we want to spend and how... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**April 21**

**State budget, economy and conservation discussed by Cameron Co. commissioners**

EMPORIUM — Cameron County commissioners discussed the state budget, economic news and conservation efforts at their regular meeting held Thursday in Emporium. Commissioner Lori Reed stated that the budget came up at a recent meeting of county commissioners from northwestern Pennsylvania. The County... - *Bradford Era*

**State offering amnesty program for those who owe back taxes**

For a limited time, the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue is giving tardy taxpayers a chance to get back taxes off their back. The Department of Revenue Friday announced the launch of a tax amnesty program that allows individuals and businesses to pay back taxes and have... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Wary eye on budget plan**

Forest County stands to take a devastating financial blow if the current state House Republican budget proposal for 2017-2018 goes through. Earlier this month, HB218 was amended and passed in the chamber. The $31.5 billion budget proposal contains sweeping cuts in funding for... - *Oil City Derrick*

**Lawmakers, Wolf need to make sure rural students aren’t left behind: Editorial**

When Pennsylvania’s policymakers and elected leaders have their annual debate over public school funding, their conversations over funding disparities tend to take place in a very binary context. That disparity debate generally pits the largest urban school systems -... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Dollars and sense: make Pa. House’s size a 2017 priority**

Amid the budget season debate over how best to cut government costs in Pennsylvania, one issue has been notably absent from the remarks of state lawmakers: shrinking the size of the commonwealth’s bloated Legislature. Many observers have been calling on the General Assembly to shrink its own... - *Butler Eagle*
LETTER: Funding priorities come into question
Editor, I read with interest the article "Franklin-Pittsburgh flights would continue under budget cut" in the April 14 newspaper. I've also been watching other issues related to budget cuts: Meals on Wheels, heating assistance (LIHEAP), Medicaid, health insurance, Social Security, the list... - Oil City Derrick

Corman: Pennsylvania Leaders Must Think Ahead More
For state government to work, leaders must look toward the future. That was the point made by state Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman, R-Bellefonte, during the Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County luncheon Monday at Toftrees Golf Resort. "I don't think we challenge ourselves to look to the future, and we... - State College News

April 19
How to fix public school funding in Pa. (column)
The cost of K-12 education in Pennsylvania is at an all-time high. At $15,000 per student per year, we rank fifth highest in the U.S. Unfortunately, the funding system is characterized more by distortions than by the ideals of equity and adequacy, and it's getting worse.... - Hanover Evening Sun

Area leaders seek key to effective use of dwindling education funding
Education and business leaders from the Greater Johnstown area turned their focus Tuesday to how inadequate funding can lead to academic struggles, especially for students in poor regions. A collaboration between the Greater Johnstown School District, Pitt-Johns-... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

Pa. House eyes gambling, expanded wine sales as financial panaceas
HARRISBURG — House Speaker Mike Turzai’s office boasted he would lead an effort to “free the wine,” and some of his GOP colleagues continue to look at expanding gambling as a way to fill a looming budget shortfall. But in the upper chamber, Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman, R-Centre,... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

More bad marks for Pennsylvania finances
Sometimes the best way to make things stick is to just keep pounding. With that in mind, allow me another couple of hits on Harrisburg politics, greed, budget madness, and abuse of your tax dollars. Two things just popped up. First, in a new analysis this week, Pennsylvania gets a “D” for... - Philadelphia Daily News

April 18
Adventures in state budgeting
In Lewis Carroll's classic Wonderland tale, Alice famously asks the Cheshire Cat, “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” “That depends a good deal on...
to get to,” the feline answers. The response could equally apply to those asking what's next for... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**April 17**

**Gov. Wolf’s budget proposal boosts minimum wage to cut Medicaid costs**

In Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed state budget, administration officials say increasing the state’s minimum wage to $12 an hour — above the current $7.25 — would shave almost $50 million from public-benefit costs. The bulk of that potential savings, according to budget estimates, would be... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**Another #PaBudget, another trip through the looking glass: Bob Dick**

Another #PaBudget, another trip through the looking glass: Bob Dick PennLive Op-Ed By Bob Dick In Lewis Carroll’s classic wonderland tale, Alice famously asks the Cheshire Cat, "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here ?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," the feline answers.... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**April 13**

**Legislators say they’re working on pensions, property taxes**

Before Pennsylvania can resolve its budget problems, it must devise a workable pension system and reform property taxes, Schuylkill County’s four state legislators said on Wednesday at the Chamber of Commerce Legislative Coffee Talk at The Lodge at Sharp Mountain.... - *Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald*

**Bad bill**

There are times when "confounding" doesn't quite do justice when it comes to describing the actions taken by the 253 men and women of Pennsylvania’s General Assembly.Consider, for instance two seemingly unrelated votes taken by the state House last week. On Tuesday, the Republican-controlled chamber voted 114-84 to send a... - *Uniontown Herald-Standard*

**April 12**

**Louis M. Shucker: Painful choices ahead for school districts**

A coalition of organizations led by Temple University’s Center on Regional Politics, or CROP, released a report in March with ominous overtones: "Hard Choices Ahead: The Financial Future of Pennsylvania School Districts.” The study examines the fiscal condition of all 500 school districts for the... - *Reading Eagle*

**This photo raises two important questions about Gov. Tom Wolf and baseball: Wednesday Morning Coffee**

Good Wednesday Morning, Fellow Seekers. There are at least three things that every Pennsylvania voter wants to know about their governor: Will he or she raise your taxes? Where does he or she stand on questions of crime and punishment? And will he or she make the schools better for all Pennsylvania children?... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*
Overpromising and underfunding: The state budget proposal
At a recent Clinton County commissioners’ meeting, the three commissioners were openly critical of recent HB218 passed by the Pennsylvania Legislature to serve as the first, but we hope not last, attempt to provide this Commonwealth with a budget for 2017-18. - Lock Haven Express

Mon chamber speaker: More funding needed for early education
A child starting kindergarten now is at a severe disadvantage if the student has not already been exposed to a smartphone, a technology expert said Tuesday at Mon Valley Hospital. “They are not part of the real world,” said Audrey Russo, president and chief executive officer of Pittsburgh Technology Council. - Washington Observer-Reporter

Corman exhorts pension reform to balance budget
State Sen. Jake Corman, R-Bellefonte, said state government has a tendency to govern by crisis. “It’s high time we change our thinking,” he said at a meeting of the Rotary Club of Lewistown, held Tuesday afternoon at Rec Park Community Center. Corman spoke briefly about public pension reform and the way government... - Lewistown Sentinel

April 11
House approval first of many steps in state budget talks
The good news is that the state House of Representatives has passed its version of the state budget in early April, nearly three months ahead of the June 30 budget deadline. The bad news is that the $31.5 billion plan is $800 million less than Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed budget. - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

State GOP budget will hurt counties
Douglas E. Hill The County Commissioners of Pennsylvania (CCAP) has some grave concerns with the recent budget bill passed by Republicans in the state House of Representatives. Far from being a “no-tax-increase” budget and far from being a document that provides a path forward for the commonwealth, it instead... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

Republican budget would cut $5 million promised to Harrisburg
HARRISBURG--Harrisburg officials plugged a longtime hole in the city's budget last year by tripling the local services tax, which is paid by people who work in the city. But that tax increase is now being used by state House Republicans as a excuse to cut $5 million in promised state aid to the city. - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Sen. Corman discusses budget, solutions at CBICC luncheon
Pennsylvania Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman, R-Benner Township, spoke about the state budget Monday to county business leaders gathered at Toftrees Resort and Conference Center, focusing on pensions, prisons and an aging population — all factors contributing to the state’s nearly... - State College Centre Daily Times

April 10
County leaders warn of tax hikes in House budget bill
HARRISBURG — County officials warn of year-end property tax hikes if spending cuts in a House-passed state budget bill become law. House Republican leaders steered a $31.5 billion budget bill through the chamber last week in an early round of the annual budget debate.... - Scranton Times

Senate likely to resist push to ax rural center
The state House’s $31.5 billion spending plan would eliminate a research agency created to study issues affecting rural Pennsylvania. It’s a move House Republicans say would be part of a broader push to eliminate duplicative services. But it’s likely to run into a roadblock in the state Senate, where... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

Prison board fears proposed state budget cuts
Proposed cuts from the state for court programs, including adult probation, will cripple the county court system, according to officials. “This is going to kill us,” said Commissioner Rick Mirabito during the Lycoming County Prison Board meeting Friday morning.... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Ron Southwick: State budget moves along but plenty of work remains
Pennsylvania state House Republicans can’t be accused of procrastinating. Last week, state House Republicans approved their version of a state budget. It came two months after Gov. Tom Wolf issued his spending plan. The state House approved a budget nearly three months before the 2017-18... - Reading Eagle

Rapp discusses governor’s proposed department consolidation
Rep. Kathy Rapp speaks with residents at Senior Center. State Rep. Kathy Rapp visited the Titusville Senior Center on Friday to discuss a proposed merger of four state departments, Human Services, Health, Drug and Alcohol Programs, and Aging. According to a postcard that was presented to each person who listened to... - Titusville Herald

Balancing the budget
It’s not unusual for state legislators to be working in June on their budget that takes effect in July. This year, it appears the process is going better. - Somerset Daily

Your challenge: Get answers from Pa. legislators
Look, I know you don’t want to do this but it’s such a good opportunity. With your lawmakers out of session for two weeks, it’s a perfect time to reach out and touch them. They’re off for a much-needed rest after being in Harrisburg crafting really important laws to improve the quality of your life ... no, wait,... - Philadelphia Daily News

School districts: Wolf’s vow of more funding undercut by drop in transportation dollars
A $50 million cut for transportation in Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed budget has Lehigh Valley school districts concerned the changes would wipe out some if not all of the funding gains he is
promising them. Wolf’s 2017-18 spending plan includes a $200-million hike in education... - Allentown Morning Call

April 8
Wolf says GOP budget would idle 1,500 Pa. staff
Pennsylvania’s Democratic governor warned Friday that the Republican budget proposal, which the House has approved, would put about 1,500 state employees out of work, with prisons in line for the deepest job cuts... - AP

Budget fight of cuts vs. taxes heads to Pennsylvania Senate
Pennsylvania’s House Republican majority this week muscled through a $31.5 billion response to Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget plan. It now goes to the Republican-controlled Senate with a heavy emphasis on belt-tightening in human services, prisons and state operations to whittle down a massive... - AP

State’s fiscal problems take toll
Pennsylvania has been struggling with chronic budget problems since 2009, the peak of the Great Recession and a year when Michael Jackson and Ted Kennedy died. Governors and lawmakers have used a variety of strategies and actions to bridge huge revenue deficits and fashion a balanced state budget during the... - Scranton Times

Idea buys time
Legislators face an easy policy call but a difficult political one regarding Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposal to assess a $25-per-resident annual fee on local governments that rely entirely on state police rather than providing their own coverage. As a policy matter, the proposal is sound on many levels. It would mitigate... - Scranton Times

April 7
Gordner: Budget shortfall 'sobering'
SUNBURY — With the state facing a potential $850 million budget shortfall for 2016-17, Sen. John Gordner (R-27) describes the 2017-18 budget process as "sobering." Gordner made his comments during Thursday’s Northumberland County Conservation District legislative... - Shamokin News-Item

Wolf, lawmakers shouldn’t cut grants to private colleges: Janet Morgan Riggs
Earlier this week, students from private colleges and universities across the Commonwealth gathered in Harrisburg to meet with legislators and make the case for the importance of the state’s commitment to higher education. More specifically, for state grant programs that help to make college... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Commissioners unhappy with budget proposal
LOCK HAVEN — The Clinton County commissioners said they’re none too pleased after Pennsylvania House Republicans unveiled a $31.5 billion, no-new-taxes budget
proposal. Commissioners Paul Conklin, Pete Smeltz and Jeff Snyder all suggested that several cutbacks proposed in the state budget represent another significant...

A critical time for Hanna, Scarnati in Harrisburg
State Rep. Mike Hanna, Democrat serving the 76th House District, voted Tuesday against a $31.5 billion Republican-proposed state budget, saying it “fails to meet the needs of the commonwealth or working families.” State Sen. Joe Scarnati, Republican representing the 25th Senatorial...

April 6
Matzie, Marshall call for adequate community college funding
As the General Assembly starts getting serious about budget negotiations, two Beaver County legislators are arguing that Pennsylvania’s 14 community colleges need to be properly funded to meet the changing needs of students. “Education is the currency of progress, and Pennsylvania’s...

Budget battle looms for Wolf, GOP lawmakers
Lowman S. Henry It will never rival the Super Bowl, the World Series or even March Madness in popularity, but Pennsylvania’s budget battle is underway and - unlike those sporting events - it has a real world impact on every taxpayer. In February Gov, Tom Wolf released his budget proposal. Predictably, it...

April 5
Pa. House sends pared-down budget bill to Senate
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania House Republicans on Tuesday sent the Senate a pared-down budget bill over the objections of Democrats and of county commissioners, who warned the funding cuts could lead to property tax increases. The House approved the legislation 114-84, with all Democrats and a few...

House passes 2017-18 state budget proposal
In a 114-84 vote, the state House of Representatives passed its 2017-18 budget proposal, doubling down on spending cuts with a “no-tax-increase” proposal. “I think this is a really great first step in this process,” said state Rep. Garth Everett, R-Muncy, but he added this is just the beginning...

PA House Passes GOP Budget Wolf Calls A ‘Good Starting Point’
Voting mostly along party lines, the state House has sent the Senate a Republican-crafted budget bill in response to the spending plan proposed by Democratic Governor Tom Wolf. The House Republican budget now on its way to the Senate calls for spending $800 million dollars less than what Governor Wolf proposed. And a key House...

James backs budget bill
State Rep. R. Lee James (R-64th), of Oil City, approved the Republican budget proposal that passed the state House Tuesday. “We approved today a budget that would fund various state
programs and services without raising taxes and increasing the burden on Pennsylvania... - Oil City Derrick

Pa. House passes trimmed-back state budget with no new taxes, modest school funding increase
The Pennsylvania House of Representatives has voted 114-84 to move its first edition of a state budget bill for 2017-18. The measure passed on strong party lines Tuesday with all yes votes cast by Republicans, and just four of the majority Republicans joining all 80... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

If they’re really pro-family, lawmakers should restore this harmful childcare cut: Diane P. Barber
Why is it so hard to convince policymakers and others to invest in child care? High-quality child care is where early learning takes place. Children who receive high-quality early education arrive at school ready to learn and they do better in school. We have to overcome this "blind spot" that helping families work and care... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Divided House votes to advance Republican budget proposal
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A divided Pennsylvania House on Tuesday gave its approval to a $31.5 billion Republican budget proposal that was touted by supporters as a way to fund priorities without increasing taxes... - AP

House GOP pass cuts-heavy budget proposal
Facing an estimated $3 billion deficit heading into next year, House Republicans pushed a budget proposal through to the Senate that would decrease state spending for the first time since the 2011-12 fiscal year. The $31.5 billion proposal represents a decrease of nearly $246 million... - York Dispatch

State Rep. Turzai offers insights on budget, education to chamber
With a burst of enthusiasm Tuesday morning, state Rep. Mike Turzai, R-28, Pittsburgh, talked about the state budget proposal before the House. “We’re passing a budget today and we’re going to send it over to the Senate. We’re ahead of schedule,” Turzai said at the... - Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald

April 4
Don’t weaken state’s drug and alcohol department, Cambria-Somerset county group urges
In Justyn Patton’s eyes, Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposal to fold the state’s drug and alcohol program and three other agencies into the Department of Health and Human Services couldn’t have come at a worse time. Pennsylvania is battling an opiate epidemic that has only gotten worse.... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

Pennsylvania House GOP plan doubles down on spending cuts
HARRISBURG — House Republicans on Monday introduced a $31.5 billion no-new-taxes budget
proposal for Pennsylvania government that would add politically touchy cutbacks to a relatively austere plan floated by Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf as the state grapples with a huge deficit... - AP

Divided House votes to advance Republican budget proposal
A divided Pennsylvania House is giving its approval to a $31.5 billion Republican budget proposal that's touted by supporters as a way to fund priorities without increasing taxes... - AP

House Republicans "build" on Gov. Wolf's budget proposal by cutting $815 million in spending
Pennsylvania House Republican leaders, encouraged by Gov. Tom Wolf's lower-growth state budget proposal for 2017-18, showed the Democrat how it's really done Monday, with a counter-offer that actually cuts spending from current-year levels. The GOP's $31.5 billion general fund proposal is expected to get a floor... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

State House may vote Tuesday on trimmed-down budget
HARRISBURG — Recommending government-wide cuts, House Republican leaders Monday unveiled a budget that a top Democrat said “cuts into the bone” of what he described as Gov. Tom Wolf’s already austere spending plan. The Republicans called for spending $31.5 billion in the fiscal year that... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

House GOP moves budget bill
HARRISBURG — The House Republican majority proposed a state budget Monday that lines up with Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposal to boost the basic education subsidy by $100 million while seeking deeper cuts in agency spending. The Appropriations Committee approved the $31.5 billion spending plan on a... - Scranton Times

Pennsylvania House GOP Advances Its Budget Proposal
Without any Democratic votes, a state House committee has advanced a Republican budget plan, one that spends less than the budget offered by Governor Wolf, and does not call for tax increases. Facing a multi-billion dollar deficit, the budget approved along party... - KYW News Radio 1060

April 3
How Harrisburg (probably illegally) mishandles road and bridge funds
Today we offer a fresh example of Harrisburg hoodwinking taxpayers and mishandling money through its arcane budget process. Buckle up. It’s a bumpy ride. You may know Pennsylvania has the nation’s highest gas tax (58.2 cents a gallon), expressly enacted to fix rotten roads and broken bridges across... - Philadelphia Daily News

Money from the state that schools can’t use
Gov. Tom Wolf has been beating the drum for more state funding for public education ever since the election campaign of 2014. And, no doubt, school districts would welcome additional
revenue from Harrisburg, both to pay for critical classroom needs and to give some relief to weary property owners... - *Levittown Bucks County Courier Times*

**State gambling, once again, with financial future**
The resurrected attempt in the Pennsylvania Legislature to legalize video gaming terminals in taverns, bars, truck stops and off-track betting locations makes some sense from a revenue perspective for this state that’s dogged by an estimated $3 billion shortfall.... - *Altoona Mirror*

**Pa. Lawmakers Remain Skeptical Of Wolf Consolidation Plan**
If a recent Senate hearing is any indication, many state lawmakers remain skeptical of Governor Wolf’s proposal to consolidate four state departments into one new department. Governor Wolf wants to fold the Departments of Health, Human Services, Aging, and Drug and Alcohol Programs into one big “Department of Health... - *KYW News Radio 1060*

**Officials: Mergers a concern for aging offices**
A proposal to consolidate departments of Health, Human Services, Drug and Alcohol and Area Agencies on Aging has aging officials in Snyder and Union counties calling foul. Concerned that seniors needs will be overshadowed and lottery funds meant to benefit older Pennsylvanians will be diverted to the other departments... - *Sunbury Daily Item*

**Short on ideas, but not chips**
A bipartisan group of state legislators put on their croupier personas Monday and took to the microphones at the Capitol to extol, again, the apparently infinite virtues of state-sanctioned gambling. The lawmakers doubled down on their pattern of trying to resolve the... - *Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald*

**April 2**
**Lawmakers’ ‘slush fund’: Its time has passed**
State lawmakers’ $118 million “reserve” could help with Pennsylvania’s projected multibillion-dollar budget shortfall. Often called a “slush fund,” it’s less than fully accountable to taxpayers. And lawmakers didn’t tap it during the last, nine-month budget impasse,... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**March 31**
**State still in fiscal fairy tale**
Pennsylvania faces the difficult task of addressing what Gov. Tom Wolf and the Legislature seem to agree is a $3 billion deficit — a figure $1 billion higher than what state government
acknowledged during 2016-17 budget preparation last year. Because no one in Harrisburg has disputed that ominous observation... - Altoona Mirror

March 30
Pennsylvanians Facing Historic Tax Increases with Gov. Wolf’s New Budget
Posted by Sven Werner, Patrick Gleason on Wednesday, March 18th, 2015, 3: 28 PM
PERMALINK Recently Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf presented his first budget, which includes the largest state tax increase in Pennsylvania history. His budget proposal of $33.6 billion represents a 16 percent increase over last... - Americans for Tax Reform

The Thursday wrap
Getting Pennsylvania’s spending under control is the focus of two bills advanced by the House State Government Committee. As a revised version of the Taxpayer Protection Act, HB110 limits state spending increases to the combined rate of inflation and population growth. Any spending above... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Too high
All the talk in Harrisburg these days is about the state’s budget deficit, estimated by some to be as high as $500 million or possible even higher. But there is a surplus in Harrisburg these days, even though no one wants to touch it. It’s the surplus generated over the years by our own state Legislature.... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

As state mulls PSP service fee, Pa municipalities consider options
As the state government considers whether or not to begin charging municipalities a service fee for relying on the Pennsylvania State Police, those municipalities are now facing a series of tough questions of what to do moving forward. Nearly half of Pennsylvania’s 2,500 municipalities rely on the state police... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Ortitay questions Wolf budget, has proposals of his own
The Pennsylvania budget is a roiling pot again, and this time state Rep. Jason Ortitay is gripping the ladle. Ortitay, a Republican from South Fayette Township, has criticized the budget Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf proposed in early February for fiscal 2017-18. Facing a $3 billion deficit, Wolf said he came up with cuts and... - Washington Observer-Reporter

March 28
Gaming expansion back on state Legislature’s radar
HARRISBURG — When state legislators made a plan to pay for the current fiscal-year state budget, they included money from an expansion of gambling. But nine months later, they still haven’t agreed on how to do it. The demand for that money hasn’t gone away. Gov. Tom Wolf’s... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Could bar games help Pennsylvania’s budget woes?
HARRISBURG – A bipartisan group of lawmakers said Monday the cash-strapped state could hit the jackpot by legalizing slots in taverns and then taking a cut of the action. Proponents say
there are thousands of illegal slots machines already in place in Pennsylvania taverns and social clubs.... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

Quit blaming Gov. Tom Wolf
Editor: I noted with growing disdain in a recent Citizens' Voice article on our next state budget that Gov. Tom Wolf is unjustifiably being blamed by the Republicans, it seems, for many of the problems in Pennsylvania and our difficulties in having a balanced state budget.... - Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice

Guest Column: Faulty revenue projections will KO Pa. budget
By Lowman S. Henry, Times Guest Columnist There is a lot of truth to the old joke about assuming. You know the one: “What happens when you assume? You make an A-- out of U and ME.” That saying applies perfectly to the state budget. Budget makers make assumptions that frequently don’t materialize turning them into the... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

Teacher backs Wolf’s budget
As an educator, I have devoted my career to helping students achieve their potential, and measuring and rewarding their progress. That’s why I’m supporting Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed 2017-18 state budget. It makes real progress in terms of providing the resources... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

March 27
Effort to legalize video gaming in bars is back with broader support
Backers of a renewed effort to bring slots-like video gaming terminals to Pennsylvania's bars, private clubs, and other places are keeping their fingers crossed they have hit upon a way to win over the state's casino operators to support their plan. A plan unveiled on Monday that for the first time has bi-partisan... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Harrisburglars strike again
State lawmakers and the governor are trying to figure out ways to plug the state's $3 billion deficit, a dilemma that could produce yet another prolonged, costly and divisive budget battle. Here's a starting point: Take the Legislature's $118 million slush fund and... - Levittown Bucks County Courier Times

March 26
Our view: Harrisburg needed to save Erie's schools
In his pointed March 6 reply after Pennsylvania Education Secretary Pedro Rivera rejected the Erie School District's financial recovery plan, schools Superintendent Jay Badams asserted that the "basic underlying fact is that we need additional state funding.”... - Erie Times-News

Pat Howard: Status quo will sink Erie's schools
By the time Pennsylvania's fair funding formula for schools really starts to level the playing field, today's students will be pushing 40 and Erie's school system will have long gone under,
dragging the city and region down with it. The Pedro Rivera who faced a capacity crowd at the Jefferson Educational... - *Erie Times-News*

**March 24**

**Vet School losing state funding matters for more than just dogs and cats**

Penn’s School of Veterinary Medicine's faculty and students say the food supply and economy of Pennsylvania will be at risk if the school loses the $30 million in state funding — 20 percent of their entire budget — that Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf proposed cutting in his latest budget.... - *Daily Pennsylvanian*

**Study says Pennsylvania highways lose funds to state police**

HARRISBURG, Pa. A new study suggests that more than $200 million a year in highway construction funds are being diverted unconstitutionally to subsidize the Pennsylvania State Police... - *AP*

**State budget talks begin with optimism, but challenges loom**

HARRISBURG — Lawmakers and lobbyists are expressing modest optimism as state budget talks get underway a month after Gov. Tom Wolf laid out his $32.3 billion spending plan for 2017-18. How firmly rooted that optimism will be is far from clear as looming questions suggest serious challenges must be overcome to rein in a $3... - *Sunbury Daily Item*

**March 23**

**UPT goes to Harrisburg — Students make pitch for public university funding**

University of Pittsburgh at Titusville students, Briana Davis, Rebecca Fagley (at front, left), Matthew Baker, and Savannah Pollow (at back, left) met with Sen. Michele Brooks (front, center) and Sen. Scott Hutchinson to voice their own personal opinions and concerns and to discuss what their... - *Titusville Herald*

**More than 100 students travel to Harrisburg to advocate for higher state appropriations for Penn State**

About 120 students traveled to the Capitol building in Harrisburg this morning to advocate for higher state appropriations for Penn State, as part of Capital Day. This marks the eighth year the University Park Undergraduate Association, students, alumni and volunteers have participated in the day, which is... - *Penn State Daily Collegian*

**Hoarding while state starves**

You have to hand it to the state Legislature for innovative budgeting. Or, perhaps it’s that members don’t understand the definition of budgetary “balance.” Even though Pennsylvania’s Constitution requires a balanced budget, the Legislature has managed to concoct a... - *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*

**March 22**

**Return cash slush fund to budget**

You have to hand it to the state Legislature for innovative budgeting. Or, perhaps it’s that
members don’t understand the definition of budgetary “balance.” Even though the Pennsylvania Constitution requires a balanced budget, the Legislature has managed to concoct a... - Scranton Times

**State Education Secretary opposes budget cuts**
Pennsylvania’s secretary of education has asked his federal counterpart to “reverse course” on proposed cuts and reiterated that Gov. Tom Wolf’s administration remains “steadfast in its opposition” to the budget reductions suggested by President Donald Trump.... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

**Pennsylvania Legislature’s surpluses grow 18 percent to $118 million**
With weeks of budget hearings in the rearview mirror, the Legislature is embarking on springtime talks to try to find enough money without raising taxes to cover rising state costs and deficits. On Monday, lawmakers identified extra money — in the Legislature’s 45... - Allentown Morning Call

**March 21**
**State police fee proposal no-brainer**
There is a word to describe the cost for state police protection that Gov. Tom Wolf would impose on local governments that don’t have their own police departments — bargain. Wolf has proposed a $25-per-person fee in those communities, far below the costs borne by residents of communities that fund their own departments. As... - Scranton Times

**Education funding should be priority**
We watch with great concern as Pennsylvania faces a very difficult budget year. While we are aware of numerous priorities among Pennsylvania’s many constituencies, we believe there is no greater priority than investing in Pennsylvania’s future by providing fair and adequate funding for our... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

**State lawmakers sit on $118 million surplus**
HARRISBURG — State lawmakers are sitting on a $118 million surplus, an eye-opening amount at a time when state government is wrestling with chronic budget deficits. An audit report for fiscal 2015-16 identifies $118 million in uncommitted funds available at the year’s close last June 30. The audit report was... - Scranton Times

**Audit: PA Legislature has nearly $120M surplus**
The state Legislature ended the 2015-16 fiscal year with a nearly $120 million funding “surplus” — even after a nearly nine-month budget impasse drained its reserves. Lawmakers in Harrisburg had $118.4 million in unspent funds as of June 30, according to an annual audit released Monday that was conducted by... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

**March 20**
**Legislature ended 2016 with $118M surplus despite budget impasse**
Despite a nine-month budget impasse that forced lawmakers to borrow money to keep their
governmental branch in business, they still ended the 2015-16 fiscal year with a $118.4 million financial cushion. An audit report on legislative spending in 2015-16 is expected to be... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Baer: Pennsylvania’s magical mystery budget
Three weeks of state budget hearings just concluded with nary a fistfight or major snit. Could this signal an end to annual budget animus between Democrat Gov. Wolf and the Republican legislature? Could it mean stress-free budget passage by the start of the fiscal year in July?... - Philadelphia Daily News

Editorial: State needs more than smoke to balance budget
These are high times in Pennsylvania. The state is on the brink of a new era of medical marijuana. Entrepreneurs are lining up across the state – and willing to pony up big bucks – for a shot at snagging a license to run either a marijuana-growing facility or a medical marijuana dispensary.... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

March 19
Capitol Roundup: Wolf says Trump budget will harm Pennsylvania communities
Gov. Tom Wolf this week reacted strongly to President Donald Trump’s proposed budget, saying it will harm communities across Pennsylvania. “Thousands of Pennsylvanians rely on programs that are being eliminated or dramatically cut in President Trump’s budget proposal,” Wolf... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

Senator pledges to push for Erie schools funding: Letters to the editor
I am writing in reference to funding from the state of Pennsylvania for the Erie School District. The recent request for an additional $31.8 million by the Erie School District was flatly turned down by the state Department of Education. My recent visit to Erie in early January involved touring two schools in... - Erie Times-News

Expanding gambling is a bow to the inevitable
It wasn’t that long ago that if you had an itch to gamble, you needed to gas up the buggy and drive to Atlantic City, N.J., or head to the airport and jet off to Las Vegas. Those days are long gone. Atlantic City is on the ropes, and Las Vegas has been transformed into a bustling metropolis where family entertainment is... - Washington Observer-Reporter

Politics as Usual: What to watch as Legislature returns
The House and Senate return this week to the state Capitol for three session days: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. It’s the first time both chambers will be in at the same time since Gov. Tom Wolf presented his 2017-18 budget proposal in early February. Here’s a list of items to watch.... - Allentown Morning Call

State police tab $4.8 million for NEPA
Municipalities across Northeast Pennsylvania would pay nearly $4.8 million annually for state police coverage if a proposal by Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf wins legislative approval, a Sunday
Times analysis found. The governor’s proposal to charge a $25 per person, or per capita, fee... - Scranton Times

March 17
'Why should I give you more money?' The Pa. House’s new budget boss makes his mark: Analysis
So you can say this much for House Appropriations Committee Chairman Stan Saylor: After three weeks of budget hearings that would test the sanity of even the sanest of men, the York County Republican does not harbor any illusions about the prospect of an on-time 2017 spending plan.... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

March 16
Wolf budget makes progress on education
Michele Planutis Editor, As an educator, I have devoted my career to helping students achieve their potential, and measuring and rewarding their progress. That is why I am supporting Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed 2017-18 state budget. It makes real progress in terms of providing the resources our students need.... - Hazleton Standard-Speaker

Students, alumni to advocate for increased funding in Harrisburg on Capital Day
Registration for Capital Day — Penn State’s leading event to advocate for increased appropriations from the Commonwealth — closes at noon Friday on the Grassroots Network’s website. More than 150 students, faculty, staff and alumni are already set to travel to Harrisburg on March 22 to meet with state legislators Shawn Bengali, the... - Penn State Daily Collegian

March 15
Potential changes to assistance offices raising some concerns
The state’s proposed changes to county assistance offices have local office employees worried and state legislators still looking for answers. “We still don’t fully understand the proposal because they don’t have it fully flushed out yet, I don’t think,” said state... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

March 13
Wolf’s early retirement plan aimed at narrowing budget shortfall, but savings questioned
HARRISBURG — Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposal to help balance the Pennsylvania budget by offering some state workers an incentive to retire early is an approach that has been tried throughout the United States. Such proposals do not always accomplish their goals. Retirement incentives... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pennsylvania GOP lawmaker on budget: 'We know we have to come up with some revenue'
With three weeks of budget hearings behind them, Pennsylvania's big Republican legislative majorities now have months of budget-making ahead of them, and perhaps more than ever, a willingness to increase taxes to deal with the state’s persistent post-recession deficit.... - Allentown Morning Call
State Republican lawmakers sobering to huge budget deficit
HARRISBURG — With three weeks of budget hearings behind them, Pennsylvania’s big Republican legislative majorities now have months of budget-making ahead of them and, perhaps more than ever, a willingness to increase taxes to deal with the state’s persistent post-recession... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Pennsylvania GOP lawmaker on budget: ‘We know we have to come up with some revenue’
With three weeks of budget hearings behind them, Pennsylvania’s big Republican legislative majorities now have months of budget-making ahead of them, and perhaps more than ever, a willingness to increase taxes to deal with the state’s persistent post-recession deficit... - AP

Lawmakers talk budget, pensions, education spending and more
LOCK HAVEN — From taxes to pensions to corrections to — of course — politics, lawmakers invited Friday to the Clinton County Economic Partnership’s annual Legislative Luncheon addressed those and other issues head on. In attendance at the Lock Haven Moose Lodge and before a large crowd were... - Lock Haven Express

Let’s not bet on gambling
Pennsylvania lawmakers and Gov. Tom Wolf have a $3 billion riddle to solve. That’s the structural budget deficit that comes back to haunt the state when the... - Bloomsburg Press Enterprise

March 12
Health services merger a work in progress
When four Wolf Cabinet secretaries appeared at a budget hearing before the Senate Appropriations Committee last week, the hearing room was packed with advocates, lobbyists and vendors. They were trying to glean details about the proposed creation of an umbrella Department of Health and Human Services by merging the departments... - Scranton Times

State ahead of wrong curve
The Trump administration is expected to attempt cutting the federal budget for environmental programs by as much as 30 percent to help pay for its desired massive increase in military spending. Doing so would have a debilitating effect on environmental protection in every state.... - Scranton Times

Pennsylvania GOP lawmakers sobering to huge budget deficit
With three weeks of budget hearings behind them, Pennsylvania’s big Republican legislative majorities now have months of budget-making ahead of them and, perhaps more than ever, a willingness to increase taxes to deal with the state’s persistent post-recession deficit... - AP

March 10
Here’s three ways to tame Pa.’s out of control budget: Beth Anne Mumford
During last month’s budget address, Gov. Tom Wolf indicated a willingness to restore some fiscal sanity to our state budget. Specifically, he said he was open to reductions in spending and not raising... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

Local school fund struggles underline need for reforms
Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed state budget calls for modest increases in special education and basic education funding to Lycoming County’s eight school districts. But the superintendents of the districts say it isn’t enough. The first reaction is to say that, given state budget woes, the... - *Williamsport Sun-Gazette*

My Turn: Support for Child Care Works
With a career spanning more than 40 years in human resources, I often dealt with poor employee productivity and absenteeism due to unpredictable and unreliable child care arrangements. In fact, we sometimes struggled to find workers in the first place due to their difficulty in finding safe,... - *Sunbury Daily Item*

Boost fair taxation, revenue
Powerful narrow interests have had their way with the Pennsylvania Legislature since the heyday of railroading and coal-mining. Current beneficiaries include the natural gas industry, big corporations and public employees. By hewing to those interests at the expense of the broad public... - *Pottsville Republican and Evening Herald*

Is it too early to call off summer vacation? Maybe not this #PaBudget season: Analysis
Drew Crompton was thinking about summer vacation with his wife and kids the other day. And then he started thinking about the calendar and the looming debate over Gov. Tom Wolf’s latest budget proposal. He did a bit of math. And then he was a whole lot less sure about making plans.... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

Carlisle schools assuming level state funding in budget planning
Carlisle Area School District is sticking with level funding from the state even though the budget proposed by Gov. Wolf calls for an almost $289,000 increase in subsidies. Business Operations Manager Owen Snyder briefed school board members Thursday on the local impact the state budget may have, assuming lawmakers... - *Carlisle Sentinel*

March 9
Wolf’s budget leaves taxpayers holding the bag: Lowman S. Henry
By Lowman S. Henry There is a lot of truth to the old joke about assuming. You know the one: "What happens when you assume? You make an A-- out of U and ME." That saying applies perfectly to the state budget. Budget makers make assumptions that frequently don’t materialize turning them into the... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*
Gov. Tom Wolf plan to merge 4 state agencies questioned
HARRISBURG - Both Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposal to eliminate the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and his own signature opioid drug abuse-fighting program were called into question Wednesday by an influential state senator. State Sen. Gene Yaw, a Lycoming County Republican who has led hearings on... - Reading Eagle

Gov. Tom Wolf discusses budget investment in state’s economy
WILKES-BARRE — Gov. Tom Wolf hosted a roundtable discussion in Scranton Wednesday that focused on budget initiatives that will support a new way for Pennsylvania’s economy and job creation. Also on Monday, Wolf wrote to five Pennsylvania congressmen that serve on... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

March 8
Wolf says any gambling expansion, whatever it is, must mean new revenue
Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf isn’t ruling out any particular kind of casino-style gambling expansion under consideration by lawmakers, but he says tax revenue to the state can’t be a zero-sum game... - AP

Boost revenue, fair taxation
Powerful narrow interests have had their way with the Pennsylvania Legislature since the heyday of railroading and coal-mining. Current beneficiaries include the natural gas industry, big corporations and public employees. By hewing to those interests at the expense of the broad public... - Scranton Times

March 7
Auditor General says taxing marijuana could yield $200 million for state
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania’s auditor general, Eugene DePasquale, says he knows where the state could find money to help close its budget gap: by allowing the recreational use of marijuana and taxing it. At a Capitol news conference Monday, Mr. DePasquale said he estimates... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Gambling expansion is about much more than state revenue
State lawmakers who face a $3 billion budget deficit likely will look again to expanded state-sanctioned gambling to increase state government revenue. Possibilities include slot machines at six airports, casino-based internet gambling and online sports fantasy gambling.... - Wilkes-Barre Citizens’ Voice

Guest columnist: Gov. Wolf’s proposal helps fight opioid abuse
Jennifer S. Smith | Guest columnist Pennsylvania is in the middle of an unprecedented opioid epidemic that is taking a toll on every facet of our community. In 2015, the Commonwealth saw more than 3,500 deaths — that’s 10 Pennsylvanians per day — due to overdoses and the number continues to rise.... - Sunbury Daily Item
Budget hearing sparks debate on helping distressed cities
HARRISBURG — The Wolf administration wants to target state grants to help struggling cities rather than use two state programs offering tax breaks to spur revival in designated economic zones, a cabinet secretary said Monday. Dennis Davin, secretary of the Department of Community and Economic... - Hazleton Standard-Speaker

In budget fight, Wolf and lawmakers need to give counties a fair shake: Douglas Hill
By Douglas E. Hill Pennsylvania counties have a 235 year history of partnership with the commonwealth, dating from the earliest counties established by William Penn in 1682 (Bucks, Philadelphia and Chester). DOUGLAS HILL HEADSHOT ART.jpgDouglas E. Hill (LinkedIn photo)... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

March 6
State-budget common sense
By Tom Herman Boiled down to basics, Gov. Tom Wolf’s 2017-18 budget blueprint is not all that different than the one Pennsylvanians use when building a family budget: Pay the bills, try to find some savings and ferret away what you can for college or that retirement nest egg. The $32.3 billion budget the... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Wolf proposal to eliminate Delaware loophole
HARRISBURG — Creating a fairer tax system is on the state budget agenda again with a proposal from Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf to eliminate a business tax loophole. Wolf wants to close the Delaware loophole — a mechanism that allows businesses headquartered in other states to avoid paying taxes on their... - Scranton Times

Pennsylvania Lawmakers Skeptical Of Proposed Consolidations
HARRISBURG, Pa. (CBS) — As state budget hearings continued this past week, Wolf administration officials faced lawmakers who are skeptical of the governor’s plan to consolidate several state agencies. The House Appropriations Committee heard from the heads of the Department... - KYW News Radio 1060 (27391/24366)

Could legalizing marijuana be a solution to Pa.’s budget woes?
Pennsylvania became the 24th state to legalize the medicinal use of marijuana last year, a measure that opened up a new market and regulatory system still in its infancy. Now, one state official is making a case for recreational use. “The regulation and taxation of marijuana train has rumbled out of the... - Harrisburg Patriot-News (27521/24460)

March 3
Kutztown backs Wolf’s proposed funding hike for universities
The governor’s budget plan calls for a 2 percent increase for 2017-18. - Reading Eagle

Pat Stefano | Wolf’s budget plan ignores major issues
Last month, Gov. Tom Wolf proposed his most recent budget for Pennsylvania. It was a much better start than the past two years, when he proposed two massive tax increases of $4.6 billion
and $2.7 billion, respectively. The headlines blared that the budget didn’t raise broad-based taxes. A... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat

Governor says it’s time for change in Harrisburg
Gov. Tom Wolf We live in a democracy, and I understand and appreciate that we’ll often have a difference of opinions. But in state Sen. Pat Stefano recent guest column called, “Stefano rips Wolf’s budget plan,” I heard a lot of criticism without a clear proposal on how we can make a new way for Pennsylvania by seriously... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

Private wine sales cutting into sales projections at state stores
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania’s decision last year to finally allow wine to be sold in grocery stores won praise in many corners. Still, some worried it could cut into sales at the long-established state store system. On Thursday, the state Liquor Control Board acknowledged a dip — of... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Numbers suggest state police fee plan should be adjusted
We support Gov. Wolf’s proposed $25 per capita fee for municipalities who use state police for local police protection. But there’s a lot of evidence that suggests the fee actually should be higher. State Police Commissioner Col. Tyree Blocker told a Senate budget hearing... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Commentary: Workforce wins with investment in education
By Michael K. Pearson and Tomea Sippio-Smith On Monday, Pennsylvania legislators will begin their annual scrutiny of the Department of Education at budget hearings. They should be grappling with the fact that the impact of the priorities they set will go far beyond the... - Philadelphia Inquirer

March 2
State leaves Erie schools’ equity claim unaddressed
Erie schools prepare for consolidation, cuts to eliminate deficit. The Erie School District made sure its state-mandated financial recovery plan was about money. But it also made sure the plan was about equity. Neither emphasis gained support from the state Department of Education.... - Erie Times-News

State-related universities make case for funding increases
Tens of thousands of students attending Pennsylvania’s four state-related universities are likely to face higher tuition this fall if the schools’ commonwealth appropriations remain frozen at current-year levels, campus leaders testified Wednesday. Chief executives of the University of Pittsburgh, Penn State, Temple and... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Counties need funding to maintain human services
Pennsylvania counties have a 235-year history of partnership with the commonwealth, dating from the earliest counties established by William Penn in 1682 (Bucks, Philadelphia and
Chester). Over that time, the county role has evolved so that counties are now the... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

**Does the AG’s office really return $3.30 for every $1 spent?**
Budget season is a time for long meetings and big promises in Harrisburg. Competing interests jockey for a seat at the table and an advantageous line in the final budget or the fiscal code, be it a tax credit or a new program they argue will bring in more revenue in the long term. Currently, it’s the... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

**Funding for fairs up in the air**
Gov. Tom Wolf made no change to the amount of money fairs will receive as part of his budget proposal. But the Department of Agriculture is considering changing the way that money is distributed to fairs. Harry Reffner, executive secretary/treasurer of the Pennsylvania State... - Somerset Daily

**March 1**
**Layoff blame game takes center stage in Senate budget hearing**
Shortly before Christmas, hundreds of state workers who handle unemployment claims lost their jobs in a funding fight between Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf and the Republican-controlled Senate. Those layoffs led to a heated exchange Tuesday between one of Wolf’s cabinet secretaries and a Republican senator looking to unseat Wolf in the... - Allentown Morning Call

**Districts wary of budget plan**
All area school districts stand to lose transportation funds in Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed budget. Some state budget numbers came out of school board meetings Monday night, and local educators got acquainted with the governor’s budget proposal at the Pennsylvania School Boards Association’s winter series at Venango... - Oil City Derrick

**State uses little-publicized change to fiscal code to add $2.1 billion to roads, bridges over 10 years**
Pennsylvania will use a little-publicized change in the state fiscal code as part of the 2016-17 budget to fund $2.1 billion in additional road and bridge repairs over a 10-year period beginning in 2018-19. Gov. Tom Wolf announced the new program, known as Road Maintenance and... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**Guest Editorial: My budget puts kids first**
There should be no greater priority for our government than educating our children, and my 2017-18 budget proposal reflects my administration’s continued commitment to fairly funding public education in Pennsylvania. Over the past two years, instead of allowing schools to become the first... - Carlisle Sentinel

**Budgets impact county and state partnership**
By DOUGLAS E. HILL Executive Director County Commissioners Association
of Pennsylvania counties have a 235-year history of partnership with the Commonwealth, dating from the earliest counties established by William Penn in 1682 (Bucks, Philadelphia and Chester). Over that time, the county role... - Bradford Era

**Invest in libraries**
Investing in libraries is an easy decision. As we enter the state budget season, with the cuts and consolidations of departments, and tightening budget restraints, Pennsylvania libraries are the keystone that can fill the gap — holding all of these services together for our residents with a more efficient use of funding... - Sunbury Daily Item

**February 28**
**Northampton Area School District concerned that drop in transportation subsidies offsets state budget increases for education**
How will state budget affect Northampton school district? A decrease in transportation subsidies from the state as a result of Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget proposal will result in a minimal net gain for the Northampton Area School District despite increases in special and basic... - Allentown Morning Call

**Bleak picture emerges at hearing on city finances under Trump**
As U.S. Rep. Brendan Boyle finished outlining potential funding cuts facing Philadelphia under the Republican-controlled Congress, City Council President Darrell L. Clarke paused, then let out a sigh. “I will have a difficult time sleeping tonight,” Clarke said... - Philadelphia Inquirer

**$2 billion now available for PA’s highways, roads, and bridges**
PennDot will spend $2 billion on road maintenance and highway and bridge projects in the next decade, Pennsylvania’s governor announced Tuesday. The money will help modernize Pennsylvania’s aging infrastructure, Governor Wolf said in a news release Tuesday. Half of the state’s 40,000 miles of... - Philadelphia Inquirer

**Adkisson: A novel approach to budgeting — honesty**
Pennsylvania’s budget is predictably out of whack again after being built on foolish and dishonest revenue estimates by Gov. Tom Wolf and state legislature. This was foreseeable, and avoidable, but in order to win reelection, the governor and state legislature built a budget based on a revenue growth... - Carlisle Sentinel

**Budget versus public safety: tough balance**
Gov. Tom Wolf faces a difficult journey regarding his proposal to merge crime-related services into an umbrella agency known as the Department of Criminal Justice. Such proposals have failed before, under the weight of logical concerns, and there’s no indication that most state lawmakers are excited about... - Altoona Mirror

**Because of high OT bills, Pa. prisons could instead hire more guards, still save money: report**
A state government oversight committee Monday released a report suggesting Pennsylvania
has been penny-wise and pound-foolish when it comes to staffing state prisons in recent years. The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee found that the Department of Corrections could have saved up to $22 million in the last full budget year... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**PennDOT To Announce Highway Maintenance And Preservation Initiative**

HARRISBURG (CBS) — The state’s transportation secretary told lawmakers on Monday that PennDOT will announce a major highway maintenance and preservation effort. Appearing at Senate Budget hearings Monday, PennDOT Secretary Leslie Richards told lawmakers about PennDOT’s new “RoadMaP”... - *KYW News Radio 1060*

**DEP proposing fee increase to improve oversight of drinking water**

HARRISBURG — The Department of Environmental Protection is considering a fee increase on public water supply systems to raise an additional $7.5 million to shore up its beleaguered safe drinking water program, the agency’s acting secretary said during a budget hearing Monday.... - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

**February 27**

**Addict’s mom backs AG’s bid for drug-fighting dollars**

HARRISBURG – Almost half the $95 million allocated in the governor’s budget for the Attorney General’s Office is pegged toward fighting drug crime. In the face of a heroin and opioid abuse epidemic that claims on average nearly 10 lives a day in Pennsylvania, it’s not enough, the state’s... - *Sharon Herald*

**Gov. Wolf Says State Lawmakers Getting Serious About Local Tax Reform**

PHILADELPHIA (CBS) — Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf says he is encouraged the state legislature may finally be ready to tackle tax reform, a move he says could benefit local property owners who are footing the bill for schools. Speaking at a senior forum in Philadelphia, Gov. Wolf says there is... - *KYW News Radio 1060*

**Pa. tax amnesty program sound**

Pennsylvania’s government has a good shot at gaining $100 million or so to help cover its yawning deficit from the best possible source — delinquent taxpayers. Revenue Secretary Eileen McNulty told lawmakers at a budget hearing this week that the Wolf administration will launch an amnesty program aimed at... - *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*

**Fair funding provides small gains for districts in Wolf’s proposed budget**

A first look at the impact of Gov. Wolf’s proposed $80 billion budget for the coming fiscal year offers at peek at the effect last year’s adoption of the fair funding formula for education is having on local schools. The formula was adopted and put into place for the first time last year and... - *Pottstown Mercury*

**Editorial: Time for towns to pay for state police patrols**

They are about to get down to brass tacks in budget talks in Harrisburg. Which, of course, if the past few years are any barometer, means nothing will get done until the July 1 deadline is in
sight. Actually, that may not be the case. Already there are signs that both... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

**Report: Online gambling can bring Pa. more than $400 million in next six years**
A report released Monday states that Pennsylvania can rake in more than $400 million by 2022 if lawmakers legalize online gambling. The 14-page white paper comes as state legislators prepare to open hearings about how to use expanded gambling statewide to help fill a... - Allentown Morning Call

**Key PA Dem: Republican-Style Budget From Democratic Gov**
HARRISBURG (CBS) — Pennsylvania budget hearings opened this past week in what’s shaping up to be another unusual budget season. Democratic Governor Tom Wolf sought and failed to get increases in sales and or income tax rates in his first two budget proposals.... - KYW News Radio 1060

**Guest Column: Three ways for Wolf, Pa. to attack deficit**
By Nathan A. Benefield, Times Guest Columnist Imagine if Stephen King had written Green Eggs and Ham. What if Dr. Seuss had penned The Shining? Gov. Wolf’s third budget address was an equally disorienting shift in tone and substance – almost as if the most liberal governor in the... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

**Many concerns as state budget debate to start**
Deliberations on Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed 2017-18 budget are set to begin in Harrisburg — and some area legislators are prepared to ask a lot of questions. Many of the taxes Wolf is proposing were questioned by the group of Republican legislators who attended a Manufacturers and Employers... - Hazleton Standard-Speaker

**Gov. Wolf off to good start with budget**
Oren Spiegler Although there may be some devils in the details, I believe that with some exceptions, Gov. Tom Wolf is off to a good start with the budget blueprint he has presented for the upcoming fiscal year. He should be given credit for tackling reasonably well a huge deficit that is estimated to be $3... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

**Wolf pitches early retirement, prompting concern about pension debt**
Part of Gov. Tom Wolf’s plan to deal with a multi-billion-dollar structural deficit is to shrink the state’s employee complement by urging workers to retire early. But lawmakers — particularly Republicans — have repeatedly brought up concerns that this would just add unnecessary millions to the... - York Daily

**Another Wolf budget, another try for a severance tax - here we go again: Colin McNickle**
It was 19th-century French economist Frederic Bastiat who reminded that "an act ... gives birth not only to an effect, but to a series of effects." COLIN MCNICKLE HEADSHOT ART.pngColin McNickle (PennLive file) "Of these effects, the first only is immediate; it manifests itself... - Harrisburg Patriot-News
Cut deal on wages, budget
Besides the actual cost to taxpayers, the worst part of the state government’s $3 billion accumulated deficit is that politicians have balked on innumerable opportunities to correct it. The current budget contains a $700 million deficit for the fiscal year that... - Scranton Times

Budget realities make Wolf’s cop tax debate-worthy
Gov. Tom Wolf is proposing a $25 per person tax on municipalities without a police force to raise $63 million in funds for the state police, a plan bound to have its share of critics. It's entirely understandable that those who lead municipalities that get their police protection for free from state police would resist any... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Pa Secretary: Unemployment Comp System Wounded, Bleeding
HARRISBURG, PA (CBS) — As state budget hearings began last week, the Secretary of Labor and Industry minced no words as she characterized the status of Pennsylvania’s unemployment compensation system. Secretary of Labor and Industry Kathy Manderino appeared before the state... - KYW News Radio 1060

February 24
Reorganizational study of Pa. state university system takes center stage at budget hearings
It's hard times at some of Pennsylvania's public universities. By mid-summer and late fall, several universities in the 105,000-student State System of Higher Education will have depleted their operational reserves and be looking to borrow from other reserves that are dedicated to... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

New Pa. poll shows most voters view state, country on wrong track
WASHINGTON — Ask Pennsylvania voters what is the most important problem facing the state and the nation, and what do you hear? It’s not the Obamacare repeal that Congress is tackling, or the immigration policies that President Donald Trump issued in his first few days in... - Allentown Morning Call

Covering towns without local police cost Pa. troopers $600M a year, commissioner says
HARRISBURG — Providing law enforcement to communities without their own local police costs the Pennsylvania State Police about $234 per person annually, nearly 10 times the $25-per-person fee that Gov. Tom Wolf has proposed charging the municipalities, the agency’s head testified... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

State schools’ funding fate hits next level
State congressional hearings to determine how much funding the 14 state-owned universities, including Clarion, will be granted took place in both the Senate and House on Thursday. The hearings were the next step in the budget process that the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF) hopes will... - Oil City Derrick
COLUMN: Wolf’s plan to merge cabinets not in best interest of Active Aging
Anyone with a heartbeat knows that the budget negotiations in Pennsylvania are the most complex and frustrating exercise in human endeavor. Part of the problem is that we are dealing in finances expressed in millions of dollars that ultimately lead to billions of dollars. As humans,... - Meadville Tribune

Wagner: I have many questions about Wolf’s budget (column)
As you may recall, Gov. Tom Wolf presented his 2017-2018 state budget proposal on Feb. 7. The Senate and the House Appropriations Committees are currently conducting budget hearings with the heads of each state department and agency. These hearings are an opportunity for committee members to ask questions... - York Daily

Poll: Pennsylvanians want Affordable Care Act fixed not repealed
As President Donald Trump and Congressional Republicans face mounting pressure for their plans to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, less than one-third of Pennsylvanians want it repealed and nearly half say it made the health-care system better, according to a new poll released Thursday.... - Beaver County Times

February 23
Bloom, Tallman talk state budget with chamber members
State Reps. Stephen Bloom and Will Tallman gathered with business leaders Wednesday morning to discuss what is shaping up to be a somewhat different state budget season. “We have a Republican-style budget from a Democratic governor,” Bloom said. “We’re starting this budget season from a place much... - Carlisle Sentinel

Pa. Revenue secretary ‘very confident’ tax amnesty program will chip away at tax debt owed to state
Revenue Secretary Eileen McNulty is “very confident” that Pennsylvania will take a chunk out of the $1.1 billion in delinquent taxes owed to the commonwealth through the upcoming tax amnesty program. McNulty shared with the House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday that the... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

‘Wounded’ unemployment compensation system focus of Labor & Industry budget hearing
Labor & Industry Secretary Kathy Manderino didn’t need lawmakers to tell her how bad off the state’s unemployment compensation system is. She came right out during her department’s budget hearing on Wednesday and admitted it. “We are operating a wounded system. The patient is bleeding out on the... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Oped: PA Schools: Celebrating progress, sustaining investment
Over the past two years I’ve had the privilege to visit dozens of schools across the Commonwealth. These visits have given me the opportunity to join communities in celebrating the great achievements schools are making every day, as well as engage in thoughtful conversations with... - York Dispatch
February 22
Pa. budget questions answered in Capitol and on internet
Within the marble and gold-leaf trim of the majestic state Capitol, the first day of budget hearings Monday offered up polite back and forths. In House and Senate hearing rooms, lawmakers largely kept politics at bay while asking financial and policy questions of legislative and... - Allentown Morning Call (21865/19414)

Republicans skeptical of Wolf’s minimum wage, shale tax plan
Republican state lawmakers questioned Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf's assumptions for revenue from a minimum wage increase to $12 an hour and a new tax on Marcellus Shale natural gas production on Tuesday, the first day of budget hearings... - AP (21877/19426)

Pa. Republicans wary of Wolf revenue projections
HARRISBURG — Republican state lawmakers questioned Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf's assumptions for revenue from a minimum wage increase to $12 an hour and a new tax on Marcellus Shale natural gas production on Tuesday, the first day of budget hearings... - AP (22233/19767)

Lawmakers question Wolf’s budget math
HARRISBURG — Two weeks after Gov. Tom Wolf unveiled a $32.3 billion spending plan leaning on austerity measures and corporate tax increases, lawmakers used a budget hearing Tuesday to question whether Wolf’s math will add up. Much of that scrutiny focused on Wolf’s assertion that raising the... - Sunbury Daily Item (21994/19543)

Counties should not be the fall guys for state budget woes
The state's budget woes, if they are not solved, will definitely have a trickle-down effect on the budgets of counties and perhaps municipalities, boroughs and school districts. Lycoming County Commissioner Tony Mussare’s reaction to the budget prospectus of Gov. Tom Wolf was: "It looks like it's going to be... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette (21978/19527)

State lawmakers question drilling tax, wage hike as budget hearings begin
HARRISBURG — Three weeks of state budget hearings kicked off Tuesday with legislators scrutinizing Gov. Tom Wolf's proposals to enact a new tax on natural gas drilling and raise the minimum wage. Members of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees questioned... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (21774/19323)

February 21
Wolf: Budget offers new way forward for Pennsylvania
By Tom Wolf Harrisburg has been broken for years, failing to focus on what matters most to Pennsylvania families. For far too long, Harrisburg politicians have done the bidding of special interests, lobbyists, and their well-connected campaign contributors. In the past - for almost a generation - Harrisburg tried to cut its way out... - Philadelphia Inquirer (21218/18816)
House Appropriations Committee opens state budget hearings
If you are interested in how Gov. Wolf wants to spend $32.3 billion in taxpayer money in the coming fiscal year, so is the House Appropriations Committee. The newly appointed to chair that committee, Rep. Stan Saylor, has put commonwealth agencies on notice that “I don’t know” is not an acceptable... - York Daily (21368/18966)

Proposed state budget includes new money for tourism
Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposal to inject additional $6.1 million into tourism promotion should create opportunities to bring additional visitors to Northeastern Pennsylvania, area tourism officials say. While he and other agency directors await details of the governor’s... - Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice (21304/18902)

Republicans eye revenue assumptions in Wolf’s budget
Republican lawmakers are using budget hearings to question Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf’s assumptions for revenue from a minimum wage increase and a new tax on Marcellus Shale natural gas production... - AP (21745/19300)

February 20
State health centers again on budget chopping block
A quiet set of offices in a corner of the Monessen Municipal Complex, decorated with bright posters touting vaccinations for diseases such as whooping cough, the flu and Hepatitis. An office behind the County Assistance Office in Washington County, full of fliers and brochures advertising programs like Head Start and food bank... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (20954/18552)

Budget battle taking shape on different grounds
It’s yet to be seen just how much of a crisis Pennsylvania’s seemingly never-ending budget crisis will be this year. A lot of this depends on politics, as much as actual math. But this year’s proposal, from early feedback, is shaping up to be one of the most palatable yet.... - Carlisle Sentinel (21098/18696)

February 17
Analysis: State Police plan a bargain for municipalities
HARRISBURG — The fee that Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf wants municipalities to start paying for full-time state police coverage is a fraction of what other cities and towns pay for their local police departments, according to an Associated Press analysis of state data.... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

Letters: Gov. Wolf’s taxes
Gov. Wolf’s taxes People pay taxes. That is the fact Governor Tom Wolf is betting we don’t understand. For weeks, if not months, we have been hearing of a budget proposal that would not include any broad-based tax increases. Run that through the media filter and the translation is no new taxes.... - Chambersburg Public Opinion
NATHAN BENEFIELD: Reinventing Pennsylvania government
Imagine if Stephen King had written “Green Eggs and Ham.” What if Dr. Seuss had penned “The Shining?” Gov. Tom Wolf’s third budget address was an equally disorienting shift in tone and substance — almost as if the most liberal governor in the country were polishing his conservative credentials.... - Pottstown Mercury

Pennsylvania first lady in Bristol Borough to discuss governor’s pre-K education funding plan
Amid a crowd of several dozen preschoolers at Radcliffe Learning Center, Pennsylvania first lady Frances Wolf read from a colorful pair of children's books. However, it's a different story she and her husband, Gov. Tom Wolf, hope to tell once the state's 2017-18 budget passes.... - Levittown Intelligencer

County could see rise in basic education funding
LEWISTOWN — If the state’s 2017-18 budget passes as it was presented recently by Gov. Tom Wolf, the Mifflin County School District stands to see an increase in basic education funding. School District Superintendent James Estep told members of the Mifflin County School District Board of Directors Thursday that following a meeting... - Lewistown Sentinel

$25 per capita police charge heavy lift for townships
Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf wants municipalities with state police coverage to pay a $25 per capita fee for the service, and it's not sitting well with local municipalities. And although Wolf says it's a bargain compared to the cost of regional police, local supervisors say it's not the same service.... - Pocono Record

Yudichak: Key to state’s financial stability lies in reform, job creation
DRUMS — The key to unlocking Pennsylvania’s financial stability lies in pension reform, property tax reform and job creation, state Sen. John Yudichak told a Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce Red Carpet Breakfast crowd Wednesday morning at the Sand Springs resort.... - Wilkes-Barre Citizens’ Voice

Harrisburg needs a massive restructuring
Lowman S. Henry At first glance they would appear to be singing off of the same song sheet. The most liberal governor in America says we have to "live within our means." The most conservative state legislature in recent memory wants to "reinvent and restructure" the way Pennsylvania develops its budgets.... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

A new approach to state budget hearings (column)
Stan Saylor This year’s budget address by Gov. Tom Wolf was a noticeable departure from his previous budget proposals, both in content and in tone. In outlining his 2017-18 budget proposal before a joint session of the General Assembly, the governor presented a budget without any broad-based.... - York Daily
Yudichak airs issues with proposed state budget
The key to unlocking Pennsylvania’s financial stability lies in pension reform, property tax reform and job creation, state Sen. John Yudichak told a Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce Red Carpet Breakfast crowd Wednesday at the Sand Springs resort in Drums. - Hazleton Standard-Speaker

February 16
Supervisors are opposed to $25 per person fee for state police use that would affect 80,000 Lancaster County residents
Township supervisors in Lancaster County’s most rural areas are irritated and concerned with Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget proposal to impose a fee for the coverage they receive from the Pennsylvania State Police. - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

Liam Midgail-Smith: Public pension issue a bargaining chip?
Berks County, Pa. TODAY’S SPONSOR: Notably absent from Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget address was a matter that’s dominated policy debates in Harrisburg for a few years: public pensions. The omission seemed odd, given the issue is almost certain to be part of budget negotiations and Wolf himself has listed it among his top... - Reading Eagle

Should you be paying for their police? Wolf’s state police ‘user fee’ renews decades-old debate
HEMPFIELD TOWNSHIP - Should taxpayers in Harrisburg and elsewhere around the state be footing the bill for police services in this solidly middle-class township near Pittsburgh? That’s a question being asked after the governor floated a new plan to help close the budget deficit and fund new hires of state police amid a... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Guest op-ed: Higher education budget unfair, misguided
By Dr. Thomas Flynn and Dr. Lex McMillan Gov. Tom Wolf warned that this would be a tough budget year. We sympathize. Every year is a tough budget year at our institutions, Alvernia University and Albright College. We must enhance the quality of our students’... - Reading Eagle

Community colleges could use more state funding (column)
HACC, Central Pennsylvania’s Community College, realizes a constrained fiscal environment at the state level is a factor that keeps funding for community colleges at current levels in Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed $32.3 billion budget for 2017-18. While we were hoping for additional state funding for HACC and the 13 other... - York Daily

February 15
Lawmakers need to come together to resolve thorny budget issues
THE ISSUE Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf’s latest $32.5 billion budget proposal features a variety of cuts designed to close a $3 billion deficit. Republican-led hearings on the proposal will begin Tuesday. Wolf, a Democrat, will have to sell his plan to the largest Republican majority in... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal
**Wolf: ‘Different Tone’ In Budget Process**

PHILADELPHIA (CBS) — Governor Wolf says a week after he outlined his budget proposal, he believes both Republicans and Democrats believe discussions are starting out from a “far better place” than they did in previous years. Last week, Governor Wolf proposed to close a multi-billion dollar budget...

- *KYW News Radio 1060*

**Appetite grows for online gaming, as questions linger**

HARRISBURG -- Gaming proponents are renewing a push to legalize online betting, sensing opportunity as the governor and lawmakers look to raise cash while avoiding tax hikes. Their efforts come despite the state's poor record of over-estimating the amount of money it can make from gaming, which has some lawmakers urging...

- *New Castle News*

**Wolf Seeks Cuts, Revenues to Plug $3B Budget Gap**

Wolf, following on his budget address to the General Assembly, traveled to Allentown on Feb. 8 to detail the administration's planned investment in job creation strategies. Speaking at the Carpenters' Training Center, Wolf said the state government should partner with research universities and...

- *The Legal Intelligencer*

**Wolf proposes cut in private college grants**

HARRISBURG — Funding for a long-standing state grant program for private colleges and universities would be halved if lawmakers approve Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed state budget. The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency has provided institutional assistance grants to nearly 90 higher education institutions...

- *Scranton Times*

**February 14**

**$25 per capita fee for state police a bargain (editorial)**

This week in the wrap-up: gun fun, you got something for me I got something for you and I got my driving clothes. Ted Czech and Sean Heisey, York Daily Record Pennsylvania State Police(Photo: Staff) One controversial item in Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget proposal involves...

- *York Daily*

**Tuesday takes**

It's baaaaaack!: Time and again we’ve warned municipalities that rely on state police services that sooner rather than later, a per-resident fee proposal would rear its head again in Harrisburg. Anyone care to guess what’s going to happen to the proposed $25-per-resident charge over time if...

- *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**Gov. Wolf’s new budget is a page out of the Bill Clinton playbook: E. Fletcher McClellan**

Labeled a tax-and-spend liberal, the chief executive decides to reinvent himself after a midterm election in which his party suffered a major setback. Looking toward a difficult re-election bid, he declares his opposition to broad-based tax increases and unnecessary government spending...

- *Harrisburg Patriot-News*
Wilkes-Barre seniors like Gov. Tom Wolf’s message on Pennsylvania budget
WILKES-BARRE — The lunch crowd at the Charles T. Adams Senior Center had a guest speaker Monday, and the attendees liked his message. Gov. Tom Wolf stopped by to tell the 75 or so senior citizens how his 2017-2018 budget proposal will help improve the quality of life and care... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

Wolf makes case for big boost in early childhood school aid
Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf is trying to make the case for one of the biggest increases in his new budget plan, nearly 40 percent more for early childhood education programs... - AP

February 13
Editorial: Communities should pitch in to support libraries
The Issue: Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget calls for no change in funding for a key educational resource. Our Opinion: It’s good news, but some serious challenges remain. During the weeks leading up to Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget announcement, library officials and supporters around the state were worried about the prospect... - Reading Eagle

Uncertainty over Obamacare’s future makes it harder to plan Pennsylvania’s budget
Congressional Republicans’ lack of a clear plan on how to best replace the Affordable Care Act has everyone from health insurance companies to hospitals to those who gained insurance coverage under Obamacare uncertain about what the future holds. Add legislators and policymakers in Pennsylvania who are in the process of... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Wolf’s budget surprise: Tax on Pa. towns that depend on State Police
HARRISBURG - For decades, towns across Pennsylvania — many of them small, rural, and cash-strapped — have relied on the Pennsylvania State Police. Some have shuttered their own police departments, realizing that it’s far cheaper to have troopers respond to calls within their borders than to... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Editorial: Pa.’s big, bad Wolf changes his tune
Welcome to the new Pennsylvania. Forget all that talk about massive spending increases – and tax hikes to pay for it all. Gov. Tom Wolf is still wearing the bumps and bruises of two brutal budget battles with the Legislature. He seems to have learned his lesson. Either... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

State tax credits in budget crosshairs
HARRISBURG — Gov. Tom Wolf wants to change state tax credits offered to businesses and other groups and slash state funding available for them by 20 percent. A cost-savings proposal in the governor’s budget for fiscal 2017-18 would convert an array of state tax credits into a block grant. That would... - Scranton Times

Republicans aren’t after Wolf yet
Well, the Republicans weren’t coming after Gov. Tom Wolf with pitchforks last week. But they weren’t exactly joining Wolf in a group hug, either. Republicans in general were lukewarm to the
budget plan unveiled by Wolf on Tuesday. Of course, the main reason for that was Wolf dropped his plans for... - Beaver County Times

**State police fee overdue**
Pennsylvanians who complain that the state’s highways don’t seem to benefit enough from the nation’s highest gasoline tax should think of the overburdened state police the next time they grouse about lousy road conditions. Some $800 million in revenue from gasoline taxes, vehicle registration and... - Scranton Times

**McKinsey suggests squeezing PLCB for more cash**
Pennsylvania’s state-owned liquor system is always a favorite target when Harrisburg needs to fill budget gaps. It was no different when the Wolf administration hired McKinsey & Co. for $1.8 million to examine state operation for potential savings and new revenue — without raising taxes. The Wolf administration posted the... - Philadelphia Inquirer

**Pa. eyes charge for state police services**
A perennial proposal to charge municipalities without dedicated police forces for the use of Pennsylvania State Police resources is again blooming in budget talks as officials look for ways to reduce a $3 billion deficit. Gov. Tom Wolf has broached the idea of assessing a $25-per-resident fee on... - Primos Delaware County Daily and Sunday Times

**Wolf’s proposed cop tax for those without debated**
A $25 per person tax on municipalities without a police force to raise about $63 million in funds for the state police is included in Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed budget, a cause for debate among local municipal officials. The proposal would only affect municipalities that do not directly fund a... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

**Mostly thumbs up for Wolf’s budget plan (editorial)**
Gov. Tom Wolf delivers his budget address for the 2017-18 fiscal year to a joint session of the Pennsylvania House and Senate in Harrisburg Tuesday. Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rep. Mike Turzai, R-Allegheny, is at left, and Lt. Gov. Michael Stack, is at right.(Photo: Matt Rourke, AP)... - York Daily

**Breaking down Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed budget: tax expansions, consolidations and raising the minimum wage**
Gov. Tom Wolf’s latest state budget proposal is bound for a rocky and complicated battle as Republicans in the Legislature dissect and vet its many components in the next five months. - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

**Smooth ride predicted for state budget**
Local state legislators have confidence a state budget will be approved on time this year for the first time in three years. They also believe state pension reform legislation will be approved during this session of the Legislature, they told members of the Manufacturers and... - Hazleton Standard-Speaker
A small price to pay for state police
In life, there’s no such thing as a free lunch. The same can be said about police services in Pennsylvania. Municipalities in the state without full-time police departments rely on the Pennsylvania State Police for their law enforcement, saving communities money while offering them police protection.... - *Washington Observer-Reporter*

Taxpayers in municipalities with police departments shouldn’t have to foot the bill for police protection for others
THE ISSUE According to the Pennsylvania State Police and the governor’s office, 67 percent of municipalities across the commonwealth rely, at least to some degree, on the state police to provide local law enforcement support. The cost of this coverage is borne by taxpayers statewide while the... - *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*

**February 12**
**Gov. Tom Wolf releases consultant’s report that helped him craft his 2017-18 budget proposal**
Gov. Tom Wolf’s administration on Friday released the report from a consulting firm that he hired to identify ways to reform state government and eliminate waste. A quick glance at the 79-page report from New York City-based McKinsey and Co. shows Wolf included several of the consultants’ ideas in his 2017-18... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**If budget proposal called ‘realistic starting point’**
For once, Gov. Tom Wolf pitched budget ideas to the Legislature and Republicans didn’t dismiss his proposal out of hand. The Democrat avoided calls to raise sales and personal income taxes, proposals that are anathema to the most conservative Legislature in modern... - *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*

**Is Gov. Wolf’s new budget just a warm up lap for the 2018 election?: Lowman S. Henry**
At first glance they would appear to be singing off of the same song sheet. The most liberal governor in America says we have to “live within our means.” The most conservative state legislature in recent memory wants to “reinvent and restructure” the way Pennsylvania develops its budgets.... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Here are 3 simple ways to close Pa.’s budget deficit: Tom Herman**
As state lawmakers begin debating Gov. Tom Wolf’s 2017-18 budget proposal - and a $1.7 billion deficit - they’d do well to follow a principle first noted and popularized by some very smart people working for the U.S. Navy in 1960: KISS - Keep it Simple, Stupid. The “stupid” person was a brilliant... - *Harrisburg Patriot-News*

**Governor uses broad definition to claim $2 billion in cuts, savings**
Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf promised $2 billion in cuts and savings in his new proposal to fix Pennsylvania state government’s deficit-riddled finances, but his definition of cuts and savings is turning out to be a broad one.../ - *AP*
Gov. Wolf unable to do his job
Gov. Tom Wolf shows he is unable to do the job he is being paid to do. He is now paying a firm $1.8 million of taxpayers' money to tell him how to save money. Is that not his and the legislators' job to balance a budget without paying someone else? Maybe he should start by signing all the death warrants he refuses to sign... - Allentown Morning Call

Gov. Wolf puts price tag on state police
For decades, towns across Pennsylvania — many of them small, rural and cash-strapped — have relied on the Pennsylvania State Police. Some have shuttered their own police departments, realizing it’s far cheaper to have troopers respond to calls within their borders than pay the... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A closer look at Gov. Wolf’s consolidation plan for health and human services
Gov. Wolf’s proposed 2017-18 budget says the consolidation of four departments into a new Health and Human Services Department “will drive better outcomes, improve customer service, and save more than $90 million.” Yet, most of the projected savings detailed this week by the administration... - Philadelphia Inquirer

State cost-savings accord hinges on details
Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf and the Republican-controlled Legislature appear on the same page when it comes to squeezing cost savings out of the state bureaucracy and avoiding broad-based state tax hikes to address Pennsylvania’s chronic fiscal problems. But this doesn’t mean that agreement will come quickly when it comes to... - Scranton Times

Closing state police barracks, scaling back vets homes and other ideas from Wolf’s efficiency report
Gov. Tom Wolf released a report Friday that his administration commissioned at a cost of $1.8 million and used to develop a 2017 budget proposal high on cuts and light on new taxes. The governor followed many of the recommendations contained in the report, such as a major consolidation of several departments and offering early... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Wolf, lawmakers need to do more for community colleges - Pa's real workforce development hub: John J. Sygielski
HACC, Central Pennsylvania’s Community College, realizes a constrained fiscal environment at the state level is a factor that keeps funding for community colleges at current levels in Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed $32.3 billion budget for 2017-18. - Harrisburg Patriot-News

February 10
State employees want to hear more about Wolf’s early retirement offer
Gov. Tom Wolf caught the attention of state employees on Tuesday when he dropped the news that an early retirement proposal was part of his plan to shrink the state government to help balance his 2017-18 budget totaling $32.3 billion. Employees reported this unexpected surprise created a buzz in their state... - Harrisburg Patriot-News
Phillips-Hill: Wolf budget a good starting point (column)
Gov. Tom Wolf wrote the headline for his budget address a few weeks ago when he decided not to pursue broad-based tax increases. The hard-working taxpayers of Pennsylvania have themselves to thank for the choice he made. Members of the General Assembly heard loud and clear from constituents when... - York Daily

Commissioners see impact from state budget
As the state heads into another tough budget year, one Lycoming County commissioner expressed concern over its effect on the counties. “It looks like it’s going to be another tough year,” Commissioner Tony Mussare said. “It does bring concerns to counties, especially when they talk about closing up mental health facilities and... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Police tax proposal causes concern
Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed state police tax had Cranberry Township supervisors talking over options Thursday. Township manager Chad Findlay told the supervisors that he was “shocked” to hear of Wolf’s proposal, which imposes a $25 per person tax on municipalities that rely solely on state police for protection.... - Oil City Derrick

Fee gets cautious response
A proposal that was flagged Wednesday as a likely controversial component of Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget is already prompting cautious responses from many state legislators representing Butler County. The idea — charging a $25 per-person fee to municipalities that rely on... - Butler Eagle

February 9
The Wolf budget, Round III: Painfully predictable
Compared to his first budget presentation, Gov. Tom Wolf tempered, somewhat, his enthusiasm for tax increases in his address Tuesday to the state Legislature. Now it’s all about living within the state’s means, depending on what exactly “means” means. And yet “predictable” best describes a proposed $32.3 billion... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review (16786/14698)

How to address state budget
The people who created this year’s $700 million state government deficit and its structural $3 billion deficit will gather today in the Capitol to hear Gov. Tom Wolf talk about resolving those problems. But the bigger question is whether there is any commitment in that room to resolve... - Hazleton Standard-Speaker (17150/15055)

State budget calls for unified health services
Gov. Tom Wolf wants to put all state health programs under one roof. Among other consolidations in his 2017-18 budget proposal, Mr. Wolf combines four state departments — Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and... - Scranton Times (16868/14780)
Area state lawmakers like Wolf’s call for consolidation
The call to consolidate government and reduce costs included in Gov. Tom Wolf’s third budget address Tuesday received a warm welcome from area Republican state lawmakers. “In his third budget address, I was more encouraged than in the two previous presentations due to the governor’s new perspective in... - West Chester Daily Local News (17083/14995)

Wolf starts budget path on the right foot | Editorial
Here’s one way to size up Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget proposal for 2017-18: Take a look at what’s missing. There’s no mention of the biggest threat to the state’s health: Public pension obligations. Wolf and Republican legislative leaders will be selling half a loaf if they gloss over future retirement debt yet again.... - Easton Express-Times (16920/14832)

Editorial | Wolf’s budget increases spending but sidesteps pension reform
Wolf’s proposed budget includes a drilling tax on Marcellus Shale gas wells and raises $1 billion by closing tax loopholes on sales, corporate profits and insurance premiums. Any effort to add a drilling tax has historically been met by stiff opposition by Republicans, who have leaned toward per-well fees that pump... - Johnstown Tribune-Democrat (17068/14980)

Wolf’s general state budget message, details seem at odds
Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget message this week included the admonition that “Harrisburg has been living beyond its means. Households can’t do that, and neither can we.” He proceeded to outline a $32.3 billion spending plan that includes a 3.2 percent spending increase.... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette (16948/14860)

Gov. Wolf seeks rare arrangement to lease Farm Show Complex to close budget hole
HARRISBURG, Pa. (WHTM) – A vague note in the governor’s proposed budget released Tuesday is turning some heads. Gov. Tom Wolf said he wants to lease the Farm Show Complex, only to have the state lease it back from the investor it leases it to. Confused yet? Here’s the idea in a nutshell. The state pegs the market value of the... - WHTM (17177/15080)

Wolf extends olive branch
Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed $32.3 billion state budget offers a conciliatory acceptance of political reality. Mr. Wolf abandoned earlier budget proposals to raise income and sales taxes that were dead on arrival before the Republican-dominated General Assembly.... - Scranton Times (16858/14770)

February 8
Officials: New state Department of Health, Human Services would save $90 million
HARRISBURG — Gov. Tom Wolf’s administration estimates about $90 million in budget savings from merging four cabinet agencies into a Department of Health and Human Services, state officials said Tuesday. Further details of the planned consolidation were discussed Tuesday, when... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Wolf’s budget: No big tax hikes for Pa., but government cuts and efficiencies
HARRISBURG — Gov. Tom Wolf on Tuesday unveiled a $32.3 billion spending plan for the next fiscal year that would close Pennsylvania’s daunting deficit largely through cuts and agency consolidation, while shying away from the large-scale tax hikes that helped doomed his past budget... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Inquirer Editorial: Wolf has given Republicans a budget they can work with
Gov. Wolf’s proposed $32.3 billion budget isn't just a spending plan, it’s an admission of defeat in getting the Republican-led legislature to raise income and sales taxes. With the state facing a grim $3 billion deficit through next year, however, the governor is rightly asking for a severance... - Philadelphia Inquirer

Gov. Tom Wolf kick-starts Pennsylvania minimum wage debate with bold budget proposal
If Gov. Tom Wolf has his way, some 1 million Pennsylvanians could be seeing a big raise. Wolf, in one of the most aggressive planks of his 2017-18 state budget proposal, called for taking Pennsylvania’s minimum wage from the federally-established $7.25 per hour to $12 per hour.... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

FAST FACTS: How Wolf’s latest budget proposal could affect Pa. businesses
Businesses operating in Pennsylvania could see tax increases under Gov. Tom Wolf’s latest budget proposal revealed Tuesday. Wolf has proposed changes to the sales tax and corporate income tax, as well as a hike in the minimum wage. Here are some quick facts on the budget proposals that will directly affect... - Allentown Morning Call

Highlights of Gov. Tom Wolf’s third state budget proposal
Highlights of Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf’s spending plan for the 2017-18 budget year that starts July 1... - AP

Legislators’ views differ on proposal
Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposals to pull Pennsylvania out of a fiscal mire drew mixed views Tuesday from lawmakers representing Northeast Pennsylvania. The budget is a good starting point, given the strong Republican majority Mr. Wolf faces, said Rep. Marty Flynn, D-113, Scranton.... - Scranton Times

Proposed $32.3B state budget includes severance tax, state police coverage fees
HARRISBURG — Facing a stubborn deficit, Gov. Tom Wolf proposed a state budget Tuesday that seeks to erase red ink by shrinking state government and closing tax loopholes while modestly increasing state support for public education. Mr. Wolf proposed a $32.3 billion budget for fiscal 2017-18, including $230... - Scranton Times

Wolf budget proposal calls for $12 minimum wage
Gov. Tom Wolf has been urging lawmakers to raise the minimum wage since his campaign days.
On Tuesday, he took matters into his own hands. His 2017-18 executive budget proposal calls for raising the minimum wage from $7.25 to $12 an hour. Advocates say the two-thirds increase would make it easier for families to... - Scranton Times

Wolf proposes 6.5 percent severance tax
Gov. Tom Wolf wants to impose a 6.5 percent severance tax on Marcellus Shale production, which could generate hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue. The proposal, included in Mr. Wolf’s proposed $32.3 billion state budget unveiled Tuesday, is the governor’s third attempt to levy a... - Scranton Times

Legislators optimistic, but agree Wolf budget needs serious scrutiny
WILKES-BARRE — State Sen. John Yudichak said as the state budget conversation stands today, working families and communities of northeastern Pennsylvania are going to be hurt if the partisan paralysis continues in Harrisburg. Yudichak said responsible solutions need to be advanced to invest in jobs,... - Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

Corrections, probation agencies would be merged
The spending plan includes the consolidation of the Department of Corrections and the Board of Probation and Parole into a new agency - the Department of Criminal Justice - in an effort to streamline operations. The new department would see its state funding rise by 5.6 percent to $2.5... - Reading Eagle

Gov. Tom Wolf outlines merger of state health, human service agencies
Last month, Gov. Tom Wolf announced a proposal to merge the departments of Human Services, Health, Aging, and Drug and Alcohol Programs Wolf said merging the departments could save $90 million. "By merging health-related agencies, we will reduce bureaucracy and... - Reading Eagle

Natural gas industry voices strong opposition to Wolf’s proposed severance tax
Gov. Tom Wolf has again asked the state Legislature to enact a severance tax on natural gas production, and, predictably, the industry is already fighting back against it. Wolf has proposed a different severance tax in each of his three years as governor, proposals that have largely fallen on unenthusiastic ears in the... - Beaver County Times

Republicans like some of Wolf’s budget, still bristle at severance tax, lack of pension reform
Unlike the last two years, Republican state legislators saw some good in Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget proposal on Tuesday, but they also found plenty to criticize. “It is encouraging to hear a budget address that does not include calls for massive ... broad-based tax increases,” said state Sen. Elder Vogel... - Beaver County Times

Extraction tax, police fee proposals not well received locally
Washington County Commission Chairman Larry Maggi is shown at center in this file photo. Flanking him are Commissioners Diana Irey Vaughan and Harlan Shober. Order a Print Tom
Wolf’s budget address addressed a couple of measures familiar to Washington and Greene countians.... - *Washington Observer-Reporter*

**State budget proposal has local representatives optimistic**
HARRISBURG — The unveiling of Gov. Tom Wolf’s 2017-2018 proposed budget has local state representatives cautiously optimistic looking to the future. State Rep. Tina Pickett, R-110, called Tuesday's $32.3 billion proposal a good first step for hitting the "restart button" on how... - *Towanda Daily Review*

**Lawmakers have mixed reactions to governor’s budget proposal**
The scourge of Pennsylvania’s opioid epidemic, which has scarred Johnstown and many other communities, was one of the main subjects Gov. Tom Wolf discussed when unveiling his proposed 2017-18 budget on Tuesday. He called for using the commonwealth’s $26.5 million in federal 21st... - *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*

**County commissioners applaud governor's budget plan**
In response to Gov. Tom Wolf’s unveiling of his 2017-18 budget plan, Somerset County Commissioners John Vatavuk and Gerald Walker applauded Tuesday afternoon what they saw as Wolf’s willingness to cross party lines for the good of Pennsylvania residents. “I don’t think it was as contentious as it has been in the past.... - *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*

**Devil’s in the details: Local state lawmakers discuss state budget proposal**
Local state lawmakers are applauding Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed $32.337 billion state budget that calls for no tax increase on residents and steep cuts. But some legislators are worried that the plan includes $1 billion in new taxes, including natural gas, custom programming, design and data... - *Bradford Era*

**February 7**

**Big budget mystery: Where will Wolf get $2B in cuts, savings**
The $2 billion question in Gov. Tom Wolf’s forthcoming budget proposal will be how he arrives at that amount in cuts and savings to help wipe out a huge deficit... - *AP*

**Wolf to present budget aimed at closing a $3 billion gap**
HARRISBURG — Gov. Wolf will unveil his vision for the next state budget Tuesday morning, detailing how he intends to close a daunting $3 billion deficit. In his 11:30 a.m. address to a joint session of the state legislature, the first-term Democratic governor is expected to take a different tack this... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**Mike Turzai | It’s time for a new way to solve Pa. budget problems**
As the General Assembly begins another budget season, it’s time to admit that Pennsylvania needs to overhaul state government. In the midst of a 21st-century economy driven by new technology and fundamental changes in the markets, we are still using a formula dating to... - *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*
Wolf seeks cuts, shale tax to plug budget gap
HARRISBURG — The Latest on Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget proposal for Pennsylvania’s 2017-18 fiscal year... - AP

Pa. Gov. Tom Wolf budget targets middle class voters
Three years into the job and facing re-election soon, Gov. Tom Wolf presented a $32.3 billion spending plan today that looks to appeal to middle class voters by downsizing state government, raising hourly minimum wages and targeted business tax increases. The Democratic governor’s 2017-18 budget proposal, which needs legislative... - Allentown Morning Call

Pa. courts: Funding for judicial systems remains flat under Gov. Tom Wolf’s 2017 proposed budget
At a glance: The Pennsylvania court system would see a flat level funding under Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed state budget for 2017-2018. The state judicial system would receive $355.5 million under the proposed spending plan announced Tuesday morning. What it means: The proposed funding is virtually frozen across every level... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Wolf’s budget: No big tax hikes for Pa., but government cuts and efficiencies
HARRISBURG — Gov. Tom Wolf on Tuesday unveiled a $32.3 billion spending plan for the next year that would close the Pennsylvania’s daunting budget deficit largely through cuts and consolidating government agencies as well as eliminating what he called tax corporate tax loopholes.... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Wolf budget calls for Natural gas tax, minimum wage increase
HARRISBURG - Gov. Tom Wolf is proposing a $32.3 billion spending package built off a combination of $2 billion in funding cuts and tax increases for next year’s state budget. “In my proposed budget, there are no broad-based taxes,” Wolf said during his morning address before the combined houses of the Legislature.... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Gov. Wolf’s 2017 Pennsylvania budget at a glance
Gov. Tom Wolf today unveiled his budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year for Pennsylvania. The budget calls for the consolidation of several departments as part of a search government-wide for cost savings. At the same time, Gov. Tom Wolf has proposed $1 billion in new taxes for fiscal year 2017-18, but they are... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Gov. Wolf’s 2017 budget plan: Winners and losers
Gov. Tom Wolf’s third budget plan focuses on cutting costs but provide more money to public schools and put more resources into fighting heroin and opioid addictions. Here’s a look at the winners and losers in his proposed $32.3 billion budget for 2017-18: Public schools: One of the few areas that will see a significant funding... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

Pa. budget winner: Heath and Human Services would get more money to fight opioid crisis
At a glance: The Department of Health and Human Services would get $12.9 billion, up nearly 6 percent from last year, under Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposed 2017-18 budget. What it means: The department is now responsible for most health-related programs. That’s because the departments of aging, drug and alcohol, and...

February 6
Gov. Wolf unveils his budget Tuesday: What to watch for
Wolf insiders say other potential revenue raisers could include: * Changes to the state's business tax structure, designed to close certain existing loopholes and get Pennsylvania businesses and industries generally to shoulder a little bit more of the state's tax burden....

Baer: The budget speech Gov. Wolf could give
(Gov. Wolf will present his new state budget plan Tuesday to a joint session of the General Assembly. This is not the speech he'll give. But it's one he could give.) Hey, everybody. I'll be quick cuz the Jeep's running. As you know, the state's a mess, but I plan to seek a second term next...

Wolf to deliver third budget address Tuesday
HARRISBURG — When Gov. Tom Wolf delivers his budget address Tuesday, he faces yet another year of billion-dollar deficits and few politically viable options to fill the gap. The Democratic governor will not seek an increase in state income and sales taxes to address the large deficit, since the Republican-controlled...

Film tax credits: Yell 'cut!'
A $600 million shortfall for Pennsylvania's current budget year and a projected $1.7 billion deficit for the next are reasons enough to declare “that's a wrap” for the state's $60-million-a-year film tax credits. But other reasons are at least as compelling....

Gov. Wolf faces tough Pa. budget, experts say
Gov. Tom Wolf has a difficult task ahead of him. The governor - facing a nearly $3 billion structural deficit - will deliver his budget address to a joint session of the House and Senate on Tuesday. He will be contending with a historic Republican majority that has no...

February 5
Pa’s budget hole is deeper than you think - but it’s not too late to fix it: Timothy Reese
Before I was Pennsylvania’s acting state treasurer, I had a successful business career. This has given me a unique perspective on the commonwealth’s fiscal challenges. As Gov. Tom Wolf prepares to offer his annual budget to the Legislature next week, it's no secret that our state...

Wolf looks to plug $3B budget deficit without increasing taxes
When Gov. Tom Wolf delivers his budget address Tuesday, he faces yet another year of billion-dollar deficits and few politically viable options to fill the gap. The Democratic governor will not
seek an increase in state income and sales taxes to address the large deficit, since the Republican-controlled...

Wolf to start Pa. budget negotiations in Tuesday address
The governor has said broad-based tax increases are off the table for the 2017-18 fiscal year, but he will pursue an extraction tax on the natural gas industry. Pennsylvania is facing yet another budget crisis. The amount of money being generated from new state revenue enacted with the...

Gov. Tom Wolf: A midterm review
The governor has been in the thick of it from the start, and more challenges are ahead.

For Wolf, third budget proposal poses billion-dollar questions
In his first two years in office, Gov. Wolf lobbied for hikes in Pennsylvania’s income or sales taxes to fill deep holes in the state budget. Both times, he lost the fight. On Tuesday, he delivers his third annual budget proposal, this time pledging not to rely on the kind of broad-based taxes that the...

What do you call Gov. Wolf’s consolidation plans? Just a start: Charlie Gerow
Days of his annual budget address, Gov. Tom Wolf has proposed several measures he says will save the taxpayers money and more efficiently operate state government. Gone are his massive spending increases and tax hike plans. Instead he’s talking about closing prisons, eliminating duplicative...

Wolf budget to be lighter on tax hike ideas and heavier on government mergers
Three years ago, Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf took office with a three-part plan built around his successful campaign slogan: "Schools That Teach; Jobs That Pay; Government That Works." On Tuesday, Wolf may be adding a fourth slogan — Doing The Same or a Little More With Less — when he unveils his 2017-18 spending plan to...

What’s upcoming for the Pennsylvania budget
Consolidating, squeezing and scrimping are apparently the order of the day in Pennsylvania government...

February 3
COLUMN: Needed: A new way to do Pennsylvania’s budget
Mike Turzai As the General Assembly begins another budget season, it’s time to admit that Pennsylvania needs to overhaul state government. In the midst of a 21st century economy driven by new technology and fundamental changes in the markets, we are still using a formula dating to...

Legislators need to spend more time in session
Republicans were doing a lot of talking last November after swamping Democrats in the fall
elections for the state Legislature. The Republicans gained control of both the state House of Representatives and Senate in numbers not seen in ages. The Republicans maintained that the voters had given them a mandate, and... - Beaver County Times

**Wanted - A better way to pass the Pa. budget: Mike Turzai**  
By Mike Turzai As the general assembly begins another budget season, it's time to admit that Pennsylvania needs to overhaul state government. In the midst of a 21st century economy driven by new technology and fundamental changes in the markets, we are still using a formula dating to... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

**With cash tight, Gov. Wolf pays outside consultants $1.8m - to find savings, report: Friday Morning Coffee**  
Good Friday Morning, Fellow Seekers. With a budget shortfall of $700 million and climbing, the Wolf administration has paid outside consultants $1.8 million to help the state find new ways of saving money and raising revenue. As our pal Angela Couloumbis of The Philadelphia Inquirer reports, the... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

**Gov. Wolf, lawmakers should take these steps toward a budget ‘that works’: Rick Bloomingdale**  
By Rick Bloomingdale February is the official start of the Pennsylvania budget process. In the first week of the month, the Governor has the opportunity to outline his budget priorities in an address made to a joint session of the General Assembly. Later in the month, the House and Senate Appropriations committees hold... - Harrisburg Patriot-News

**Wolf prepares to talk budget**  
On Tuesday, Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf will deliver what we'd guess is one of his least favorite speeches: his annual budget proposal to the heavily Republican state Legislature. Recall Wolf's first budget address two years ago, when the then-freshman governor called for broad tax increases to pay for significant new... - Levittown Intelligencer

**Lawmakers: Don’t cut drug funds**  
Gov. Tom Wolf is discussing consolidation of four state departments under the Department of Health and Human Services to save money and streamline service, but local legislators are skeptical. On Monday, Wolf’s office revealed a plan to merge the departments of... - Lehighton Times News

**February 2**  
**State budget challenges demand long-term fixes**  
With Gov. Wolf's third budget address on the horizon, Pennsylvania's financial woes demand long-term fixes, not last-minute dealmaking. Gov. Tom Wolf’s budget annual address is on the horizon, and so is a staggering budget deficit. Pennsylvania is barreling into the 2017 fiscal year with a massive... - Butler Eagle
**Facing a budget crunch, Wolf pays consultants -- to help find savings**

HARRISBURG -- Facing a multibillion-dollar deficit in the state budget, Gov. Wolf took the unusual step late last year of quietly turning to a private consulting firm for advice. For $1.8 million, he’s hoping McKinsey & Co. can tell him how the state can save some money.... - *Philadelphia Inquirer*

**What to expect from Wolf’s budget address**

HARRISBURG – Officially, Groundhog Day is Thursday in Punxsutawney. Unofficially, it’s next Tuesday in Harrisburg as Gov. Tom Wolf presents his budget and Fiscal Phil sees the shadow of a large deficit. Again. “I don’t think we’ve had a responsible budget for six years and... - *Carlisle Sentinel*

**How can Pa. eliminate its budget deficit?**

Pennsylvania is facing a projected $3 billion deficit. What should Gov. Tom Wolf and the General Assembly do to eliminate the deficit? The Morning Call Unbalanced budget Opinion Restrict growth in retirement benefits At one level, the solution to the looming $3 billion deficit is quite... - *Allentown Morning Call*

**Local GOP want details in Wolf’s cost-cutting proposals**

Gov. Tom Wolf is set to give his state budget address Tuesday, and local Republican lawmakers are cautiously optimistic, given his stated desire to avoid an increase in sales taxes or other taxes. Spending in the fiscal year starting July 1 could exceed $33 billion,... - *York Dispatch*

**February 1**

**Efficiency for its own sake**

Gov. Tom Wolf’s plan to consolidate four state agencies into a new Department of Health and Human Services apparently won’t do much to resolve the state government’s growing budget problems. The governor plans to reveal in his Feb. 7 budget address the savings that... - *Scranton Times*

**The Legislature should proceed with caution on the governor’s plan to create a Department of Health and Human Services**

THE ISSUE Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf announced his plan Monday to create a state Department of Health and Human Services as part of his 2017-18 budget. Wolf wants to consolidate four state agencies into a single department as a partial answer to a massive budget deficit. Wolf, a Democrat, wants to... - *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal*

**Gov. Wolf announces $10M naloxone budget proposal during event in Montgomery County**

Gov. Tom Wolf says he will ask for $10 million to put the overdose-reversing drug naloxone in the hands of more police and first responders statewide when he takes his 2017-18 budget proposal to the General Assembly next week. Wolf announced the plan during a news conference Tuesday at the Montgomery... - *Levittown Intelligencer*
Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf seeks $10M to combat opioid crisis
NORRISTOWN >> Governor Tom Wolf is calling on Pennsylvania legislators to allow $10 million in funding to combat the opioid crisis, even in the midst of a budget shortfall, in order to supply first responders with naloxone. “What we’re doing here, what I hope the General Assembly allows us... - Phoenixville News

New agency to run crucial programs
HARRISBURG — The creation of a new umbrella state department overseeing Medicaid, lottery benefits for senior citizens and opioid abuse programs won’t lead to cuts in existing state services, a Wolf administration official said. The merger of the departments of Human Services, Health, Aging, and Drug... - Hazleton Standard-Speaker

Baer: Gov. Wolf’s wonderful world of consolidation
So Gov. Wolf wants to consolidate four state agencies in the sprawling state bureaucracy into one. At last, a brave new world of less red tape and more taxpayer savings, right? And fashioned by a Democrat! Instead of separate departments of Human Services, Aging, Drug & Alcohol,... - Philadelphia Daily News

PA Governor To Request $10M To Make Sure Law Enforcement Has Access To Narcan
NORRISTOWN, Pa. (CBS) — Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf stopped in Montgomery County today to announce he’s requesting $10 million in the upcoming budget to make sure law enforcement across the commonwealth has access to the opioid-overdose-antidote Narcan. Governor Wolf says since law enforcement in Pennsylvania started carrying... - KYW News Radio 1060

January 31
Don’t delay
Gov. Tom Wolf won’t deliver his third state budget to a joint session of the state House and Senate until Feb. 7., but we already know three things will be true: First: It won’t include any broad-based tax increases, such as a boost to Pennsylvania’s 3.07 percent personal income tax or the 6 percent... - Uniontown Herald-Standard

Cuts need to be made
State government is starting to realize you can’t just keep spending money you don’t have. Sure it would be nice to keep every department the commonwealth had in past year, but there isn’t enough money available. To address ongoing budget deficits, Gov. Tom Wolf’s administration... - Somerset Daily

Wolf to Seek Another $10M to Help Reverse Drug Overdoses
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Gov. Tom Wolf will ask lawmakers for another $10 million to help save the lives of people overdosing on heroin or prescription drugs... - AP

Berks reactions mixed to consolidating agencies
Reading, PA The prospect of eliminating Pennsylvania’s standalone drug and alcohol agency
after only five years drew mixed reviews from Berks County observers Monday. Pennsylvania Secretary of Policy and Planning Sarah Galbally told reporters that Gov. Tom Wolf wanted to merge the Department of Drug and Alcohol... - Reading Eagle

Governor announces plans to combine four state health agencies
HARRISBURG, Pa. -- Call it addition by subtraction. Governor Tom Wolf, in an attempt to save money and "reduce red tape", announced plans on Monday to consolidate four state health departments into one. The administration hopes to open a new budget season on July 1 by combining... - FOX 43

Gov. Tom Wolf to propose folding 4 Pa. agencies into 1
Facing a severe budget squeeze, Gov. Tom Wolf is pushing to consolidate four state agencies into a new Department of Health and Human Services, a move intended to eliminate duplication and red tape, while streamlining delivery of services to seniors, people with intellectual and physical... - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Budget outlook gets gloomy, screams for fresh revenue source
Pennsylvania’s budget news gets more grim with each passing minute. The latest projections of the state Legislature’s Independent Fiscal Office show a potential shortfall of nearly $3 billion through next summer. That’s up from a previous projection of $2.2 billion, but the office... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

January 30
Opportunity knocks for state budget innovation
ELIZABETH STELLE “Nothing is more expensive than a missed opportunity.” Pennsylvanians should heed these words from author H. Jackson Brown, Jr. ahead of Governor Wolf’s third budget address, scheduled for February 7. Wolf and key legislative leaders have repeatedly called this year’s... - Williamsport Sun-Gazette

For the Pennsylvania Legislature, the fewer deadlines, the better
THE ISSUE State Sen. Ryan Aument, of Landisville, is proposing to put Pennsylvania on a two-year budget cycle instead of the annual spending plan due by June 30 every year. During the last decade, lawmakers missed their deadline to pass the annual state budget seven times. Aument originally introduced the idea... - Lancaster Intelligencer Journal

PA Budget Crunch: Deficit-driven cuts mean hard choices for local families
Reann Hinkle cannot speak for herself. She cannot feed herself. She cannot bathe herself. Hinkle, 66, is mentally disabled. And, she is one of the many faces of the "reinvent, restructure, redesign government" movement that is shaping Pennsylvania's budget politics in the... - Allentown Morning Call