



Legislative Update from

State Representative

Marc J. Gergely

35th Legislative District

WORKING FOR YOU

WINTER 2012

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MANUFACTURING JOBS RETURNING TO THE MON VALLEY

Hundreds of manufacturing jobs are being created in the Mon Valley thanks to the Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling industry.

Several local companies are manufacturing the infrastructure that will transport natural gas from drilling sites to market. This will create good family-sustaining jobs and could be the rebirth of "Tube City."

To see the economic impact of drilling and discuss ideas to create more jobs, Rep. Gergely hosted a tour of three manufacturing sites with Allegheny County Councilman Bob Macey, Duquesne Mayor Phil Krivacek, McKeesport Area School District Superintendent Dr. Timothy Gabauer and union and business officials.

The tour included the U.S. Steel Tubular Products facility in McKeesport, which has hired dozens of new workers and upgraded the plant to keep up with the demand for quality steel pipe from oil and gas companies.

Another tour stop was Durabond Industries where the group saw how pipe, primarily made by U.S. Steel, is prepared, cleaned and sprayed with a coating to prevent corrosion. Durabond is investing millions of dollars to build another coating facility in Duquesne to double production because of increased business from drillers. As the industry expands, Durabond could create up to 65 jobs.

The tour concluded at Christy Park Industries in McKeesport which makes large seamless steel pressure tanks for compressed natural gas. CPI could double its workforce as more vehicles transition from running on gasoline to natural gas.

Marcellus Shale is great for the steel industry, creating jobs in supplying raw materials and parts, shipping and even helping restaurants and retail businesses. We need policies that encourage the industry to grow responsibly and protect our environment, as well as provide training for the jobs being created.

Drilling for this clean-burning American energy source could revitalize our economy and make the future of the Mon Valley a lot brighter.

Rep. Gergely and Duquesne Mayor Phil Krivacek read an overview of U.S. Steel's Tubular Products facility in McKeesport.



A Durabond worker prepares to clean a pipe that will transport natural gas from Marcellus Shale drilling sites.



Workers inspect a cleaned steel pipe for surface defects before anti-corrosion coating is applied.

A Christy Park Industries "spinner" automatically heats a three-ton steel pipe to form seamless tanks for compressed natural gas.



To watch a video about new jobs in the Mon Valley, scan this code with your smartphone.



**Why can't companies find skilled workers?
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A BRIDGE TO OPPORTUNITY

Rebuilding our local economy means rebuilding and reusing old industrial sites. A big step forward is the new flyover ramp that is carrying traffic from Lysle Boulevard over railroad tracks to the RIDC Industrial Center of McKeesport.

Companies have bypassed the site for years because the tracks limited access. The flyover ramp greatly improves access and opens another 40 acres for development.

Rep. Gergely said the site has the land, rivers, roads and rails for future development. It's time to bring the jobs back and projects like this will help accomplish that goal.

Rep. Gergely speaks during the ribbon cutting ceremony for a flyover ramp to the RIDC Industrial Center of McKeesport. Better access makes the site more attractive to businesses looking to relocate.



The new flyover ramp at the RIDC Industrial Center is a signal to businesses that opportunity exists in McKeesport and the Mon Valley.

Job training urged at local hearing

There are thousands of local job openings in manufacturing, health care and information technology that employers cannot fill because many people lack the necessary education or skills.

That was the message business, union and economic development experts delivered to the House Democratic Policy Committee during a meeting in McKeesport hosted by Rep. Gergely.

"The global economic downturn combined with Governor Corbett's devastating budget cuts to education and job training programs have made the problem worse," Gergely said. "We need bold leadership that makes the state a partner with businesses, unions, public schools and community colleges to develop job training programs and upgrade facilities for the types of jobs in demand today and tomorrow.

"We need to help people out of work or underemployed to get the latest skills and certifications so they can use advanced equipment. A well-trained, skilled workforce will keep jobs in the Mon Valley and bring employers back here."



A local television station interviews Rep. Gergely about helping people get back to work during his hearing on job creation in the Mon Valley.

Good transportation means good jobs

Allegheny County's crumbling roads, bridges and mass transit are a threat to our economy, local officials told the panel of legislators. The woefully underfunded Port Authority has repeatedly faced drastic cuts to bus and light-rail service, as well as fare hikes.

The Pittsburgh region leads the nation in most structurally deficient bridges. A recent study noted there are more problem bridges here than McDonald's restaurants.

Pennsylvania cannot compete in the global economy with China and India with a Cold War-era transportation system. Traffic congestion, crumbling bridges and bumpy, undersized roads tell entrepreneurs that our region is closed for business.

Building and repairing our roads and bridges will create thousands of family-sustaining construction jobs. The modern, safe and reliable transportation system they build will make our roads safer and encourage economic investments.

The governor must show reasonable leadership on this issue. The taxpayers deserve a safe and reliable transportation system to protect our quality of life and economy.

New law ends hunting license display requirement

Hunters and trappers in Pennsylvania are no longer required to display their hunting license on an outer garment.

Gergely voted to change the antiquated law. The unnecessary display requirement caused hunters to lose more than 50,000 licenses at a cost of \$300,000 in the past six years.

Hunters are still required to have a license with them while hunting.

STATE BUDGET DEBATE

As debate on the 2012-13 state budget continues, funding for public schools, higher education and job training must be preserved.

Our public schools cannot sustain a second year of Governor Corbett's agenda of slashing education funding to force teacher layoffs, property tax hikes and reductions to successful programs like early childhood education.

For families with a student in college, this year was even worse. Tuition at the University of Pittsburgh rose 8.5 percent following the governor's \$40 million cut to the school. Students at state-owned schools also had to pay sharp tuition hikes in the wake of deep state funding cuts.

Education investments, not cuts, will rebuild our economy and encourage young people to stay in our area rather than leave to find a job in another state.

Open communication needed for Duquesne schools solution

The Corbett administration's handling of the Duquesne City School District situation is deeply troubling. When the closing of a school district is proposed, the process should be transparent with open communication involving the entire community.

Throughout this school year the governor repeatedly ignored requests to include students, parents, property taxpayers and other stakeholders to determine the district's future. Instead, our community was left to hear rumors and speculation.

The district's tenuous financial situation was made worse by the 2011-12 state budget that slashed per student funding for struggling districts, like Duquesne, but contained minimal per-student cuts for affluent districts.

We need a long-term, sustainable solution that is in the best interests of our children and our taxpayers. All students deserve a first-class education regardless of their zip code.



The governor has failed to provide open communication about the future of the Duquesne City public schools.

Tougher laws for teen drivers

Rep. Gergely voted for new laws designed to make young drivers and their passengers safer. The new rules will help ensure teen drivers have more experience and fewer distractions behind the wheel.

The new rules include:

- For the first six months after getting a junior license, drivers under 18 may not have a passenger younger than 18 who is not an immediate family member unless a parent or guardian is in the vehicle.
- After six months without a violation or accident, drivers under 18 may have up to three passengers younger than 18.
- Drivers under 18 with permits must complete 65 hours of supervised behind-the-wheel training (up from 50 hours). At least 10 hours of training must be nighttime driving, and five must be spent driving in poor weather conditions.
- Police can now stop a vehicle if the driver and passengers under 18 are not wearing a seatbelt. The fine is \$75.

TEXTING WHILE DRIVING BAN NOW LAW

Starting on March 8, texting while driving will be banned in Pennsylvania.

The new law makes it a primary offense, meaning police can pull over a driver just for texting while driving. Violators face a \$50 fine, but no points will be added to your record.

The majority of the public has overwhelmingly supported the texting ban. Gergely said he was proud to vote for the new law that will make all of us safer on the roads and prevent deadly accidents.



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FIND INSIDE:

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- **Job training investments**
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Do you qualify for a rebate on property taxes or rent?

The state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program provides qualifying senior citizens and other Pennsylvania residents with rebates of as much as \$975 based on property taxes or rent paid the previous year.

The program is open to Pennsylvania residents 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and people 18 or older who have a disability. The income limit to qualify is \$35,000 for homeowners and \$15,000 for renters; only half of Social Security and federal Tier 1 Railroad Retirement benefits need to be counted as income when applying.

Residents who receive a rebate should automatically be sent an application in the mail the following year.

You can also visit Rep. Gergely's constituent service offices to receive an application and get assistance completing, submitting or checking on the status of your application.

ATTENTION:

Korean War Veterans!

Rep. Gergely wants to honor Korean War Veterans in the 35th Legislative District by presenting them with a medal and certificate of appreciation from the House of Representatives.

12 p.m. Saturday, March 31

Wunderly Gymnasium
Penn State Greater Allegheny
McKeesport

If you or a Korean War Veteran you know is interested in being recognized, please call Rep. Gergely's office at 412-664-0035 or visit his website at www.pahouse.com/Gergely.

Please have the following information: name, address, phone number, branch of service and dates of service.