

## York County Farm Bureau Hosts Informational Meeting on Potential Transmission Line

A transmission line is going to be presented before the Public Utility Commission for parts of the southern half of York County. Transource, the company proposing the line, has projected several routes through many farms and agricultural areas, which could affect Farm Bureau Members in the southern region of York County.

York County Farm Bureau held an informational meeting on August 24, 2017 at the Airville Firehall to discuss the issues that landowners could face if the project moves forward.

Counsel from the Office of the Consumer Advocate, and an attorney from Penn State Law's Agriculture and Shale Law and Policy Center spoke at the event, among others.

President Dolores Krick reported to the Board of Directors that evening at the Board's regular Board meeting that 191 people attended the event, and that the speakers provided very beneficial information.



### SPECIAL BONUS ISSUE:

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## Record Retention Advice

- By Jeff Wickham, Account Supervisor

One of the most common questions I am asked in my travels is, "how long should I keep my records?" Many of us have years or decades worth of old tax returns, bank records, receipts, invoices, and other documents stored away. Some people would like to make better use of their space, while others want to reduce the burdens of those who would have to sort through everything someday. The IRS does provide guidance on how long certain types of documents are to be kept.

Properly filed and accurate income tax returns should be kept for seven years, as should the documentation supporting the income and expenses listed on the return. Documents related to loans and mortgages should be kept seven years beyond the year in which they are paid off. Other seven year items include retirement fund statements, and expired contracts and leases.

Keep records related to property until you dispose of it. Examples of this would include invoices for a major renovation on your home, or purchase confirmations on shares of stock. It would be wise to retain any tax assessment notices and repair records of your property for the duration of your ownership as well.

Items to be kept permanently include birth certificates, medical records, military papers, wills, trust documents, and diplomas.

Lastly, business owners with employees should keep all employment tax records for at least four years.

## RSVP for County Annual Meeting

Don't forget to RSVP for York County's Annual Meeting!

**WHEN:** September 7 Doors Open at 6, Dinner at 6:30  
Cost is \$10.00 per person/Half-price meals with dues renewal before or at the meeting.

**WHERE:** North Hopewell Winterstown Fire Hall  
122246 Winterstown Rd. Felton, PA 17322

Our speaker this year is Dr. Dennis Calvin, Director of Penn State Extension, who will be speaking on the changes being implemented in Extension and how it will impact farmers.

**RSVP** to Sarah at [yorkfarmbureau@gmail.com](mailto:yorkfarmbureau@gmail.com) or 717-849-4103 **BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2017**

\*\* All you can eat Steak and Shrimp! \*\*



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## A Note from the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board – By Director Patty McCandless

Farmland preservation efforts continue to make progress across the County of York. Four organizations operate in York County preserving farms through conservation easement purchase, or the donation of a conservation easement. To date, 280 easements, on 41,643 acres have been preserved by the County Ag Land Preservation Board alone. In total, York County contains 407 preserved farms on 52,222 acres! In Pennsylvania, 5,136 farms on 536,181 acres have been preserved through the PA Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) Purchase Program. Additional lands have been preserved by the many Land Trusts which also operate in Pennsylvania.

Conservation easements are legal instruments restricting uses on the land to agricultural or conservation purposes. Limited non-agricultural uses, which are compatible with farming, may be permitted by approval of the easement holder, or, specifically included within the easement language. For example, the State ACE program, allows one additional residential structure to be constructed on every preserved farm following preservation. Agricultural use structures are permitted by the easement if approved by municipal ordinance. Certain rural enterprises, which are minor, seasonal, or incidental to the primary farming operation, may also be permitted. Commercial non-agricultural uses are generally prohibited.

Following preservation, all easements are inspected on a schedule to ensure the easement provisions are being observed by the current landowner. Easements which involve a donated easement, or federal funding, must be inspected annually. Easement purchases using no federal funds are inspected every other year as required by the PA Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program and federal requirements. Landowner's are invited to participate in the inspection visit. The farm inspection visit is an excellent opportunity for landowners to review their easement and provide updates about the farm to agency staff. Ownership and/or farm operator changes, structural additions and/or modifications, or other proposed changes to the farm are discussed. Conservation matters and conservation programs are a common topic during this periodic visit. Letters of notice always precede the inspection visit with an invitation for landowner participation. Landowners of farms, preserved by the previous owner, typically have many questions and concerns about the easement restrictions. The inspection visit is an excellent opportunity to learn about the easement placed on the farm they have just purchased. The YCALPB and staff encourage realtors to fully disclose to prospective farm buyers the restrictive nature of the easement requirements. Landowners who consider the purchase of a preserved farm must be comfortable with the easement restrictions as they are perpetual, or, "forever run with the land" and may not be removed.

We thank our County Commissioner's for another year of farmland preservation with their approval of \$293,271 in January 2017, a new high in county funding since 2008. Increased 2017 state funding was possible through the increase in the cigarette tax and York received \$1,431,775 in state match funds. The first two quarters of 2017 found the YCALPB office in receipt of 44 easement applications, involving 4,509 acres. Thus far, three farms, covering 537 acres, have been selected by the YCALPB for preservation through easement purchase. The federal ACEP program may provide additional funds but has yet remain undetermined. In June, the YCALPB will select additional farms for land preservation.

On behalf of the County of York and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a sincere thank you goes out to the farm families who made this commitment. One of our nation's greatest securities is the commitment that farmers have made to growing local food to feed Our Citizens.

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