

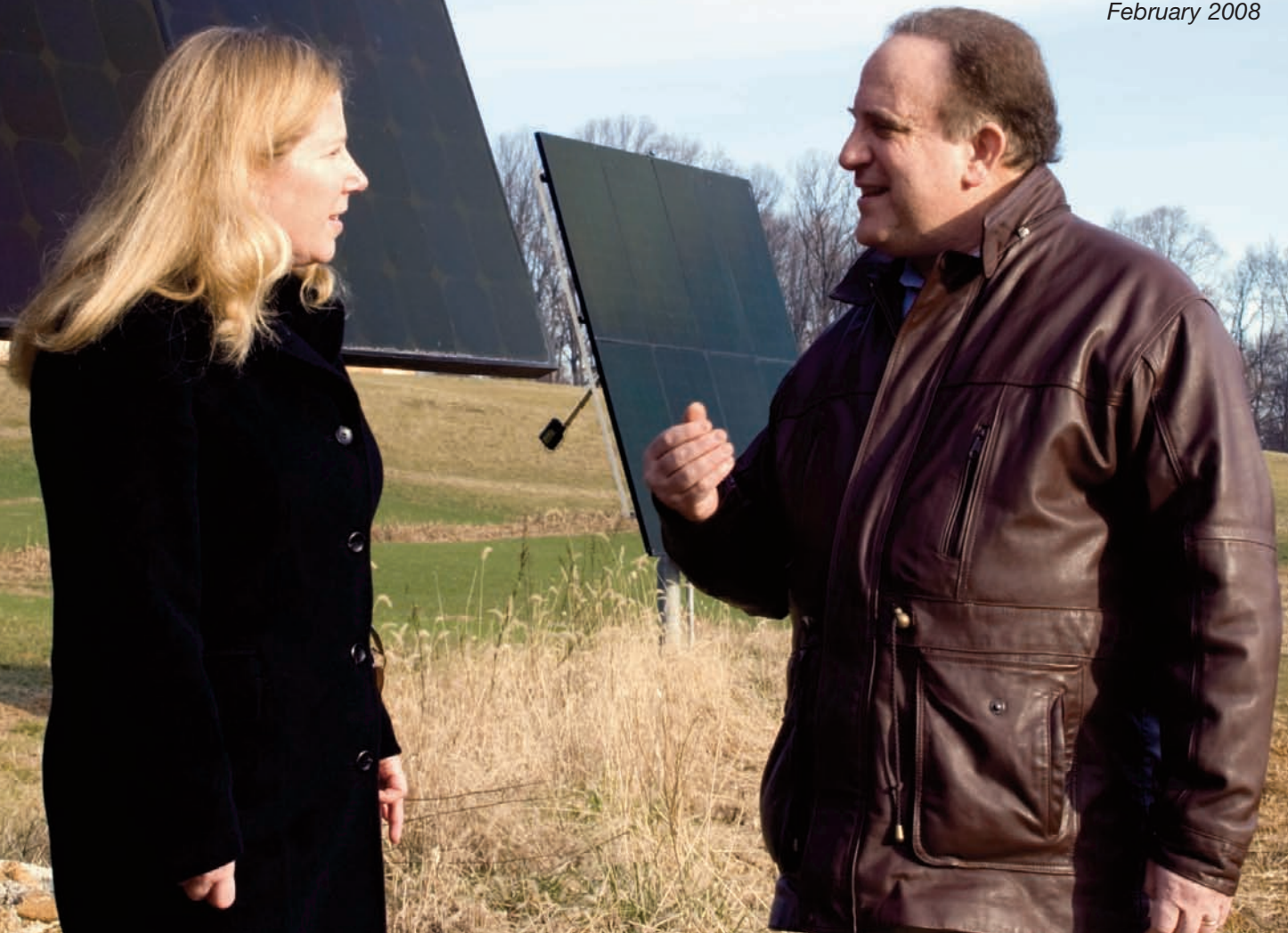
**INSIDE:** ■ Outreach Office Locations to Serve You  
■ Volunteer Firefighters, Emergency First Responders



# STATE SENATOR **Andy Dinniman**

**KEEPING IN TOUCH**

February 2008



## **Solar Energy: A Brighter Future**

Harnessing solar energy, as well as other alternative energy sources, will make Pennsylvania a business and technology leader in the new energy marketplace.

As a member of the Legislature's Special Senate Committee on Energy Policies, Senator Dinniman is working for the development of a clean energy industry. *See story inside.*



### VISIT MY ENERGY WEBLOG:

Senator Dinniman has reached out to constituents for their opinions and ideas on energy through his Weblog.

The blog can be accessed at

[www.senatordinniman.com/blog](http://www.senatordinniman.com/blog),

and serves as an online source of accurate, up-to-date information on the energy debate, including session briefings and policy analysis.



Photo by Rick Davis Studios

### ON THE COVER:

Senator Andy Dinniman chats with Sarah Hetznecker, Regional Business Manager of SunTechnics Energy Systems in Malvern, about the solar tracking system at the Charlestown Farm.

The system, which was installed in 2001, is seamlessly tied into the farm's existing electrical system. It can supplement an entire building's electrical need or, if the solar panels produce more energy than is being used, the extra electricity can be sold back to PECO.

## Dear Friend,

*Since taking office just over a year ago, I have been proud to stand for the issues that matter to you—the people of Chester and Montgomery counties. And I've always felt that I can best do so by keeping in touch with you and listening to your questions, concerns and opinions.*

*In this newsletter, you'll find just a few highlights from my work as your state Senator, such as:*

- *Working for the development of a clean energy industry;*
- *Supporting our volunteer emergency first responders; and*
- *Preserving the open spaces and historic places that we call home.*

*In all these areas I value your input as we come up with solutions that work not only for the Pennsylvania of today, but also for the Pennsylvania of tomorrow.*

*Sincerely,*

*Andy Dinniman*

## Working for a Cleaner, Brighter Future in PA

Throughout the Legislature's special session on energy issues, Senator Dinniman has been a leader in working for a cleaner, brighter future in Pennsylvania.

Dinniman has introduced legislative measures that call for increasing the use of homegrown biofuels, such as biodiesel, on our roadways and for expanding Pennsylvania's hybrid-car rebate. "The development of a biofuels industry will give our Commonwealth and our country the flexibility to use various forms of fuel at our discretion, while breaking our addiction to foreign oil. In addition, it will make Pennsylvania a business and technology leader in the new energy marketplace," Dinniman said.

In December, the Senate approved the Alternative Energy Investment Act, which includes Dinniman's proposal to expand the hybrid-car rebate. The expansion would double Pennsylvania's Hybrid Electric Vehicle Rebate Program from \$3 million to \$6 million a year and increase the size of the rebates from \$500 to \$750. An additional 2,000 Pennsylvanians a year would receive a rebate for buying hybrid vehicles such as the Saturn Aura, the Chevrolet Malibu and the Mercury Mariner, three of 13 different hybrids currently eligible for the rebate.

"Our overall strategy is to rely less on oil and other fossil fuels and more on sources of energy that are friendlier to our environment.

"Since the time of Ben Franklin, Pennsylvania has been known as a home of creative problem solvers. Regarding energy, I'm proud to say that we are already witnessing the evolution of a new kind of innovation and entrepreneurship in our state," Dinniman said. "It means thousands of new, well-paying jobs in emerging fields. It means biofuel crops from local farms at a time when development threatens more open space than ever before. It means a cleaner, brighter future for Pennsylvania."

## ■ Volunteer Firefighters, Emergency First Responders

*Senator Dinniman recently introduced the Municipal Volunteer Emergency Responder Incentive Act, his plan to reinforce the ranks of local fire and ambulance companies with new volunteers.*

The legislation, known as Senate Bill 1169, would let municipalities offer a local earned income tax credit of up to \$400 to active members of their volunteer fire and emergency medical service organizations.

“Our firefighter and EMS volunteers have long provided an invaluable service to our communities. Unfortunately, there just are not enough new recruits to replace retirees,” Dinniman said.

Statistics show a declining number of volunteer firefighters in Pennsylvania. A special Senate committee found that from 1985 to 2004, the number of volunteer firefighters in the Commonwealth decreased from 152,000 to fewer than 70,000. In addition, a 2001 study estimated that state taxpayers would have to pay at least \$6 billion a year to replace their volunteer firefighters with paid firefighters.

“Clearly, we must take steps to strengthen and reinvigorate our volunteer fire companies to avoid higher taxes. Letting municipalities give tax credits to volunteers is a lot more economical than hiring paid employees,” Dinniman said.

Under the act, the Pennsylvania Fire Commissioner would create an eligibility system that local fire and emergency medical service chiefs would use to certify that volunteers are active within their respective organizations. A volunteer’s eligibility would depend on several factors including participation in emergency calls, training sessions, drills, administrative duties and equipment maintenance.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are lining up to support Dinniman’s plan. So far, 43 of 50 senators have signed onto the legislation as co-sponsors.



Photo by Rick Davis Studios

*Senator Dinniman visits the crew of Liberty Fire Company in Spring City. To the left are Spring City Mayor Michael Weiss and Glenn Allison, president of the Chester County Fire Chiefs Association. To the right is Liberty Chief John Trego. Dinniman recently secured \$16,000 in state funding for Liberty Fire Company, which will be used to equip the company’s new engine.*

The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association and its president, Glenn Allison, have strongly endorsed Senator Dinniman’s Municipal Volunteer Emergency Responder Incentive Act.

In addition, Dinniman is working with Allison and West Chester University Professor Dr. Martin Helmke to develop a volunteer emergency responder recruitment program for college students.

“Being part of a local volunteer fire or ambulance company is an extremely rewarding experience. Once people try it, they fall in love with it,” Allison said. “The trick is, we need to get more newcomers in the door and Senator Dinniman’s incentive-based plan will help do that.”

Senator Dinniman has also reached out to firefighter relief associations, organizations that provide benefits and support services to volunteer firefighters and their families.

The relief associations are exempt from having to pay Pennsylvania sales and use taxes on tan-

gible property and services. But unlike some other nonprofit groups such as those for veterans – which have permanent tax-exempt status – firefighter relief associations have to apply for their tax-exempt status every year.

Being volunteer organizations with limited manpower, the relief associations often fail to apply for their tax-exempt status, requiring the Department of the Auditor General to note this deficiency in its audits year after year.

In response, Dinniman has introduced Senate Bill 93, legislation that would give firefighter relief associations permanent tax-exempt status like other non-profits.

“Our relief associations really make it possible for residents to volunteer with ambulance and fire companies. They are busy enough making sure local heroes and their families get the support they deserve. We should do what we can to make their operations easier and relieve them of needless paperwork,” Dinniman said.

## ■ Historic Preservation

In an ongoing effort to support historic preservation efforts in Chester and Montgomery counties, Senator Dinniman recently met with members of historic preservation organizations to discuss legislative priorities.

“Our appreciation of local history is not just a hobby, it represents an important part of the rich cultural fabric that makes up our communities and holds us together,” Dinniman said.

The event brought together over 60 members of municipal historic preservation commissions from throughout Pennsylvania’s 19th Senatorial District.

The evening included a photography exhibit on West Chester architecture, a discussion about the making of the new documentary “*Tredyffrin . . . The First 300 Years*,” information about the Chester County Historic Resources Atlas (an effort to inventory historic properties in the region through Global Positioning System technology) and a presentation on the history of Dinniman’s district office building at One North Church Street, by West Chester historian and councilman Jim Jones, followed by a brief tour. The event was capped off by a roundtable discussion with Senator Dinniman and Bob Wise, president of the Chester County Historic Preservation Network.

Recently, Senator Dinniman secured \$82,000 in state funding for the Chester County Historical Society. The funds will be used to restore the society’s second-floor gallery and support educational programs.



*Senator Dinniman tours Historic Yellow Springs with Executive Director Rob Lukens. Dinniman recently secured a \$5,000 Department of Community and Economic Development grant to support the restoration of the historic village’s Washington Building.*



*Senator Dinniman discusses plans for the Willistown Okehocking Nature Center with (from left to right) Parks and Recreation Director Mary McLoughlin, Township Supervisor Bill Shoemaker and Township Manager Hugh Murray.*

## ■ Saving Open Space

*2007 proved to be a standout year for open space preservation in Chester County. Senator Dinniman succeeded in passing legislation that paved the way for the establishment of the 1,068-acre ChesLen preserve, one of the largest open space preserves in southeast Pennsylvania.*

The publicly accessible preserve was made possible by local philanthropist H.F. “Gerry” Lenfest’s generous donation of 568 acres of the former King Ranch in Newlin and West Bradford Townships, located adjacent to the county-owned Embreeville park, to the Natural Lands Trust (NLT). In turn, Chester County agreed to transfer the 500-acre Embreeville property to the NLT, more than doubling the size of the original parkland.

Dinniman’s bill resolved contractual and legal obstacles that had jeopardized the land deal. ChesLen is now open to visitors for hiking, bird watching and other activities.

“The establishment of the ChesLen preserve is one of my proudest achievements as state Senator so far,” Dinniman said. “I’m proud of the way it came to fruition, through bipartisan legislative action that led to a partnership between the county, a non-profit land preservation organization and a private landowner. And I’m proud that for years to come, people will be able to enjoy the natural beauty right in our own backyard.”

So far, 2008 looks to be just as

promising.

Dinniman has already secured \$80,000 in state funding for the Willistown Okehocking Nature Center. The funds will go toward the design and development of the center, a green, energy-efficient building that will serve to educate the public about the environment and conservation.

“The Okehocking Preserve, named for the Okehocking band of the Unamis Tribe of the Leni Lenape Indians, is a gemstone of natural beauty in southeast Pennsylvania where visitors can walk more than five miles of trails and see an array of wildlife,” Dinniman said. “I couldn’t think of a better location for the Nature Center.”

Located in the Ridley Creek watershed, the 180-acre Okehocking Preserve was protected as a result of the Willistown Township Open Space Referendum of 1999. As a Chester County commissioner, Dinniman worked with the township to establish the preserve. It includes over a mile of the Ridley Creek and a mile of its Delchester Run tributary, a section of the creek that flows downstream to a significant drinking water resource.

# Constituent Services

## DISTRICT OFFICE

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## WEB SITE

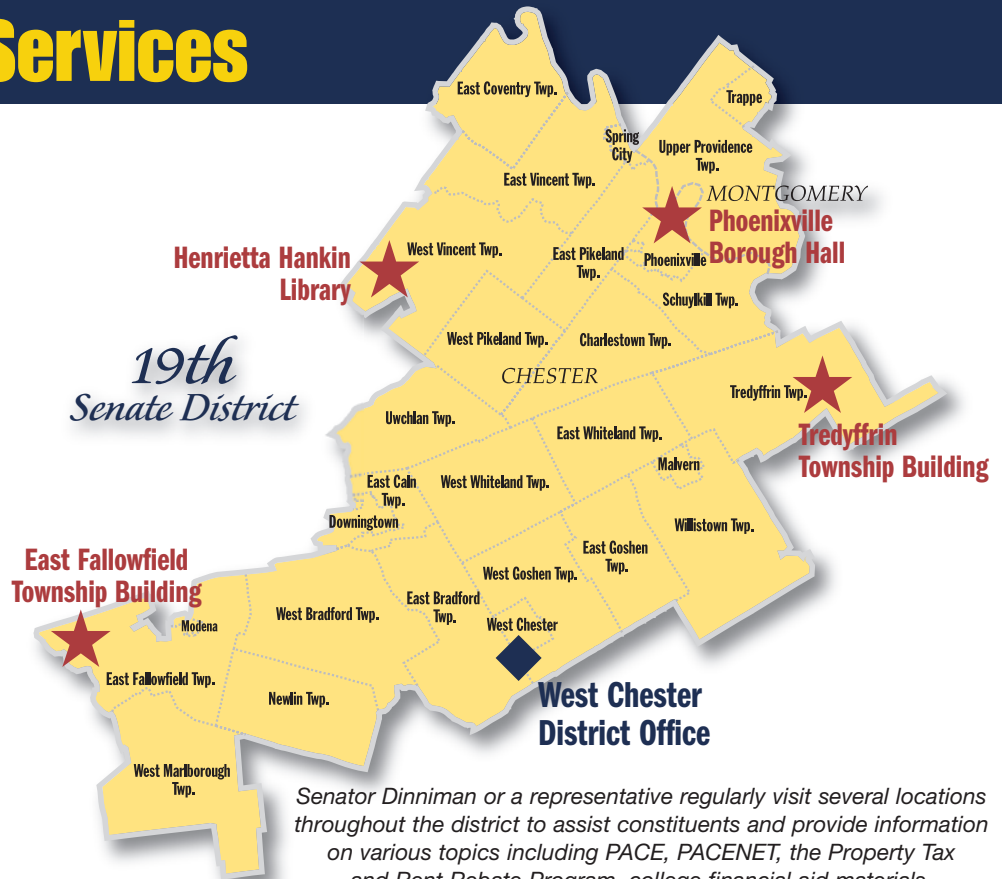
www.SenatorDinniman.com



*Senator Dinniman discusses transportation and traffic issues with David Rowland and J. Anderson Wilson of the Paoli Business and Professional Association.*



*Senator Dinniman talks with constituents at his Town Hall meeting in Upper Providence.*



Senator Dinniman or a representative regularly visit several locations throughout the district to assist constituents and provide information on various topics including PACE, PACENET, the Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program, college financial aid materials, state tax income forms, motor vehicle applications and more.

## ★ OUTREACH OFFICE LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

**Phoenixville Borough Hall • 140 Church Street**  
**First Thursday of Every Month • 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

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**Henrietta Hankin Library • 215 Windgate Dr. • Chester Springs**  
**Second Thursday of Every Month • 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

◆◆◆  
**Tredeffrin Township Building • 1100 DuPortail Road**  
**Third Thursday of Every Month • 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

◆◆◆  
**East Fallowfield Township Building • 2274 Strasburg Road**  
**Fourth Thursday of Every Month • 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

## ■ Town Hall Meeting

Senator Dinniman recently kicked off his series of Town Hall meetings at the Upper Providence Township building.

More than 50 residents came out to discuss state and local issues and raise any questions or concerns. Dinniman discussed development and traffic congestion issues, legislative efforts to decrease the property tax burden on senior citizens and tightening restrictions on harmful pollutants.

Dinniman has been extremely active in Upper Providence Township and the surrounding area. He has fought to protect the air quality, by enforcing existing air quality standards and introducing legislation that will drastically strengthen TCE regulations in Pennsylvania. He has encouraged the Commonwealth to invest thousands of dollars into local parks and community programs like Montgomery Meals on Wheels, Upper Providence Little League, and the Schuylkill Canal Association.

“These Town Hall meetings are an excellent way to keep in touch with the concerns of residents of my district,” Dinniman said.

## Code Blue

When the Salvation Army of West Chester lacked funding for its Code Blue program this winter, Senator Andy Dinniman was glad to help.

Dinniman secured \$20,000 in state funds for the program, which provides shelter, food and clothing to homeless residents on cold winter nights. West Chester police take homeless residents off the street when nighttime temperatures fall below 32 degrees F. For at least 15 years, local police have taken these residents to the West Chester Salvation Army headquarters on East Market Street.

The grant funding from Dinniman “has really answered a prayer,” said Salvation Army Captain Gerald Morgan. “I am glad I don’t have to face the decision of turning people away because the Salvation Army has never done that.”

Last winter, the West Chester Salvation Army’s Code Blue program provided emergency shelter to 60 individuals for a total of 331 nights.

“The West Chester Salvation



Senator Dinniman presents a \$20,000 check to the Salvation Army of West Chester for its Code Blue program. To the right are Captains Debra and Gerald Morgan and West Chester Mayor Richard Yoder in the Salvation Army’s storeroom.

Army literally saves lives through its Code Blue program,” Dinniman said on Wednesday. “I’m glad I was able to help in providing this vital service.”



### STATE SENATOR ANDY DINNIMAN

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