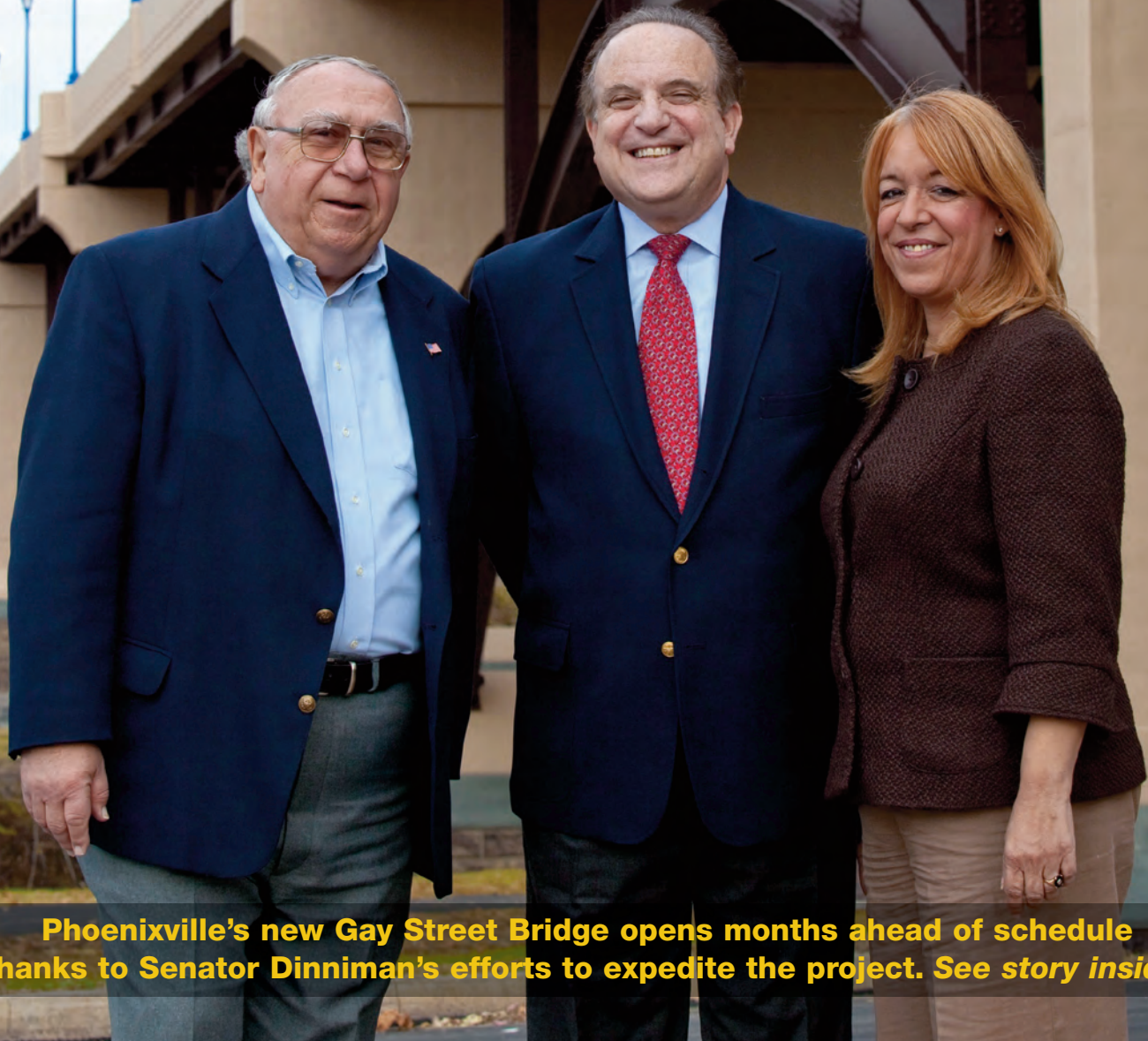




State Senator **Andy Dinniman**

Building **BRIDGES**



Phoenixville's new Gay Street Bridge opens months ahead of schedule thanks to Senator Dinniman's efforts to expedite the project. See story inside.

INSIDE ♦ Supporting Education ♦ Honoring Our Veterans
♦ Protecting Our Natural Resources ♦ Serving You



May I Help?

STATE APPLICATIONS

Driver's License • Notary Public
Vehicle Registration/Renewal
Birth and Death Certificates

SENIOR CITIZENS' ASSISTANCE

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Form
PAGE/PACENET Form
Reduced Auto Registration Form

VOTER SERVICES

Registration • Election Calendars
Applications for absentee ballots



ON THE COVER

Senator Dinniman (center), Phoenixville Mayor Leo Scoda and Kim Cooley, Executive Director of the Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce, stand at the new Gay Street Bridge.

Photos by Rick Davis



Dear Friend,

I wish you and your family a happy holiday season. The holidays are always a great time to catch up with friends and relatives. While you are enjoying the festivities, please follow these tips for a safe and healthy holiday season:

- *As temperatures drop, be sure to bundle up and dress properly;*
- *Be careful to avoid fire hazards when decorating with trees, wreaths or lights;*
- *Practice safety around the fireplace and in the kitchen;*
- *Allow for extra travel time, drive carefully and buckle up; and*
- *Never drink and drive.*

The holidays are an opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year and the challenges ahead. The memories you make this season will last all year long. So, be sure to celebrate safely.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Dinniman".

ANDY DINNIMAN
State Senator — 19th District

■ Phoenixville's New Gay Street Bridge Opens

Senator Dinniman was the driving force in expediting the replacement of the Gay Street Bridge in Phoenixville. Through his leadership in the Legislature, Dinniman was able to move up the replacement of the 84-year-old bridge.

When a three-foot section of the bridge fell down onto the road below, Dinniman personally brought the concrete block to Harrisburg to illustrate the magnitude and urgency of the project.

Thanks to his persistence, the new bridge, which spans 972 feet and is 50 feet wide, opened in October, several months ahead of time.

Dinniman has also amended a transportation bill in the Senate to have the bridge officially renamed the Veterans Memorial Bridge.

"The new bridge is not only a vital artery to Phoenixville's downtown business district, but it's also already a local landmark," Dinniman said. "The wide sidewalks and shoulders cater to pedestrians and bicyclists, while the giant steel arches evoke the region's industrial heritage."

■ Protecting Our Natural Resources

Pennsylvania sits atop one of the largest deposits of natural gas in the world—the Marcellus Shale formation.

Yet the Commonwealth is the only major natural gas producing state that does not require energy companies to contribute a portion of their profits to environmental restoration programs.

Senator Dinniman is working to change that. He has introduced Senate Bill 997, legislation that calls for a severance fee to fund environmental programs and ensure that drilling is done responsibly.

“The natural gas industry has an impact on our landscapes, on our waterways and on our wildlife. It takes a toll on our residents whose neighborhoods are zigzagged by ever-expanding pipeline projects with little regard for individual property rights,” Dinniman said. “It is high time that these multi-national energy corporations – corporations that make



Senator Dinniman, his wife, Margo, and their dog, Henry, enjoy a visit to Marsh Creek Lake. Dinniman has led the call for natural gas companies to support environmental programs that ensure that drilling operations do not contaminate our streams and lakes.

hefty profits off the extraction of a valuable and finite natural resource – start paying their fair share to the communities impacted by their operations.”

Dinniman’s bill calls for a fee based on the amount of natural gas extracted from the Marcellus Shale and would dedicate 50 percent of the revenue to environmental conservation and the communities affected by the drilling and transportation of the gas.

The Commonwealth could raise more than \$100 million in new revenue each year simply by enacting the same severance fee as neighboring West Virginia, according to the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center.

“My legislation differs from other proposals in that it devotes half of the revenue to local municipalities and environmental programs. It just makes sense that money first goes to the communities that bear the brunt of the drilling and the state environmental programs that address its risks,” Dinniman said.

■ Honoring Our Veterans

Amid the rolling hills of East Vincent Township, on the site of the former Pennhurst State Hospital property, sits the Southeastern Veterans Center—one of six state homes located throughout Pennsylvania that care for disabled and elderly veterans and their spouses.

Too many residents do not realize that so many of our nation’s heroes are literally living right next door at the Southeastern Veterans Center,” Senator Dinniman said. “It is important that we recognize them and give them the support they deserve.”

The center, which was established in 1986 and currently accommodates more than 300 veterans, has some big plans in store.

Next year construction is expected to begin on a 120-bed addition that will include a secure, outdoor area for residents in the Alzheimer’s unit. The new wing will also incorporate a home-like atmosphere with a comfortable living room, library and kitchen area, instead of a plain hospital environment.

In addition, thanks to legislation introduced by Dinniman, the Commonwealth recently conveyed 96 acres of



Senator Dinniman spends time with residents at the Southeastern Veterans Center. Pictured (from left to right) in the center’s chapel are Henry Paiste, president of the center’s Residents’ Council, Rebecca Kesselring, the center’s Commandant, Dinniman and MaryJo Sparks, vice president of the Residents’ Council.

the surrounding Pennhurst property to East Vincent Township. The land will be preserved as open space, and township officials are currently developing a master plan for a park.

Dinniman has urged officials to include in the park design an outdoor

area near the center where veterans and residents can interact. “I encourage you to stop by the Southeastern Veterans Center and volunteer just an hour or two of your time to those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom,” Dinniman said.

■ Supporting Education

Despite an exceptionally tight budget process, Pennsylvania has maintained and even increased funding for important educational programs that prepare our children for the future. Dinniman fought for these programs through his leadership as Minority Chair of the Senate Education Committee.

◆ Early Childhood Education

The budget maintains level funding for Pre-K Counts (\$86.4 million), the Head Start Program (\$39.4 million), the Accountability Block Grant (\$274 million) and Early Intervention programs (\$173.5 million). Previous budget proposals called for cutting Pre-K Counts and Head Start funding almost in half.

◆ Basic Education

The budget includes a \$300 million increase in the Basic Education Subsidy over last year, thanks in part to federal stimulus funds. School districts throughout the 19th Senatorial District can expect to see an increase of between 2 percent and 5.2 percent in their basic education funding.

The budget maintains \$13.6 million in funding for Science: It's Elementary, an important program that brings



Senator Dinniman discusses legislative issues with students from the Great Valley High School Animal Protection Club. The club also recognized Dinniman as Humane Legislator of the Year for his work to tighten Pennsylvania's animal cruelty laws and put an end to puppy mills.

hands-on science lessons into the classroom and benefits thousands of students each year.

The budget also includes \$8 million in funding for the Dual Enrollment

Program, which allows high school students to take college courses for college credits, or credits toward their high school diploma. While this represents a \$2 million decrease from last year, other proposals called for eliminating the program outright.

◆ Special Education

The budget maintains support for special education at the current level (\$1.027 billion), in addition to the \$361 million in total federal stimulus funding that will go directly to school districts for special education.

◆ Nonpublic Schools

The budget increases funding for the nonpublic school textbook program to \$27.2 million and for services to nonpublic schools to \$89 million. Overall, the budget calls for an aggregate increase of almost \$1.6 million in funding for nonpublic schools.

■ Reforming Harrisburg

Pennsylvania was the last state to pass a budget this year, and the stalemate threatened our schools, community organizations and social service agencies.

Senator Dinniman is working to ensure that that never happens again. He has introduced Senate Bill 1136, legislation that would keep vital state funding flowing even if the legislature and the governor cannot reach a budget agreement.

“Because of this year’s budget impasse, public schools were on the verge of cutting important programs, private and parochial school students did not get their textbooks on time and important nonprofits, like the Downingtown Senior Center, were days from closing,” Dinniman said. “Our schools and community organizations should not be held hostage by political disputes.”

Under Dinniman’s bill, if a budget



Senator Dinniman talks with residents during a visit to the Downingtown Senior Center, which was on the verge of closing in August due to the state budget impasse. Through Dinniman’s efforts and support, the center managed to stay open and continue serving hundreds of seniors.

is not passed by the July 1 deadline, the Commonwealth simply continues to appropriate funding for local and

county governments, schools, social service agencies, and its own departments and facilities at 90 percent of the previous year’s levels.

By continuing funding at the 90 percent level rather than 100 percent, social service agencies and state facilities could keep open their doors and lawmakers would have the flexibility they need to reprioritize funding and make spending cuts where appropriate.

On a related note, Dinniman continues to work to reform local government. He recently introduced Senate Bill 1086, legislation that would eliminate the partisan election of school board members. This change would shift the focus of school board elections from political differences to the real educational and fiscal issues at stake.



Dinniman chats with residents of Manatawny Manor in East Coventry.

Recognizing Our Seniors

Senator Dinniman regularly visits senior centers and senior living facilities throughout the area to recognize residents 90 years or older with special birthday greetings.

“I always enjoy chatting with our senior citizens and letting them know about all the helpful services Pennsylvania has to offer, from tax rebates to medical assistance,” Dinniman said. “It is a great way to keep in touch with their concerns and views.”

Since taking office three years ago, Dinniman has presented Senate Certificates of Recognition to more than 500 senior citizens on their birthdays under his 90+ Program.

He has also distributed thousands of Senior Packets to elderly residents. The packets include helpful information on dozens state senior programs, as well as an application the free SEPTA pass for senior citizens.

To request a Senior Packet or participate in the 90+ Program, please contact Senator Dinniman's District Office.

SERVING YOU

DISTRICT OFFICE

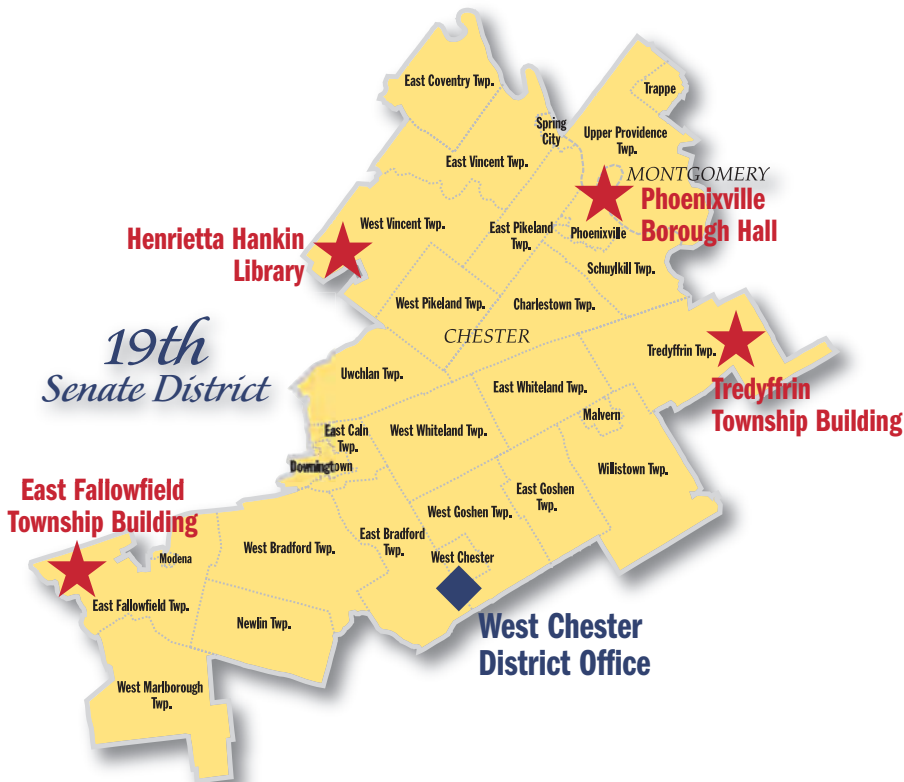
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Hours: Monday – Friday • 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

HARRISBURG OFFICE

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19th
Senate District

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

OUTREACH OFFICE LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

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

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

Tredyffrin Township Building • 1100 DuPortail Road
Third Thursday of the Month • 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

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



STATE SENATOR ANDY DINNIMAN

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■ Sharing the Harvest – A Resounding Success ■

Hundreds of area residents representing a broad range of faith-based organizations and nonprofit social service agencies recently joined Senator Dinniman for Sharing the Harvest at Valley Forge Christian College.

Sharing the Harvest was a gathering of various faith-based organizations, local nonprofit agencies and people of good will to review their accomplishments, assess the needs of today and volunteer to address the challenges of tomorrow. The annual event featured information on ongoing efforts to feed the hungry, music from local choirs

and a plethora of volunteer opportunities.

Dinniman said it is important that programs like the Chester

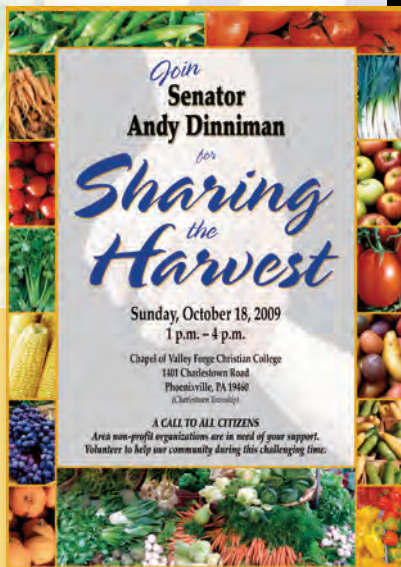
County Food Bank continue to grow and expand their efforts in difficult economic times. Through Dinniman's Gleaning Program, volunteers have collected and distributed more than 412 total tons of fresh fruit and produce to those in need over the past decade.

Many of those in attendance said they left not only better informed, but also inspired to volunteer and work together in a creative and cooperative environment to help those in need.

If you were unable to attend Sharing the Harvest but are interested in the program, please contact Senator Dinniman's District Office.



Senator Dinniman greets residents and volunteers at Sharing the Harvest.



“Cuts to important programs at the federal, state and local levels mean that people of faith must step forward to answer the call of those in need. It’s up to us to enact meaningful change in our communities. And though we come from different religious traditions and backgrounds, as Americans, this is a responsibility that we all share and one that we all understand.”

–SENATOR ANDY DINNIMAN