



News for Immediate Release

July 12, 2012

Governor Corbett Recognizes State Employees with Innovator Awards

Harrisburg – Governor Tom Corbett today presented awards to employees at six state agencies for initiatives that have reduced state spending, increased efficiency or improved service. The employees received the first-ever Governor’s Innovator Awards during a ceremony at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg.

“These are just a few examples of the improvements, both large and small, that are being put in place to make state government work more effectively for Pennsylvanians,” said Governor Corbett. “Today, we recognize the dedicated state employees who are making positive changes through innovation.”

The Governor’s Innovator Awards were presented to:

Roger Riley and Glenn Rowe, PennDOT Highway Occupancy ePermitting

PennDOT has significantly reduced the amount of time it takes for construction companies and other job-creating businesses to obtain a Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP).

PennDOT issues nearly 15,000 such permits each year for construction projects that impact traffic patterns on state roads each year. Obtaining a permit through the department’s manual, paper-based processes took nearly a month, leading to customer frustration and the potential risk of project delays.

Last October, PennDOT launched a new application, review and approval system that allows users to submit their application online, track its progress and print a copy of their approved permit. Obtaining a permit now takes about 10 days instead of 30 to 45 days. PennDOT is exploring how the technology behind the new HOP system can be used to improve other permitting processes.

John Clark, Office of Administration Steve Burns, Office of the Budget Steve Weidner, Department of General Services Travel Expense Reform

These agencies worked collaboratively to increase accountability in employee travel expense reimbursements and improve management of the state’s vehicle fleet.

Beginning on Jan. 1 of this year, employees must provide a receipt or other documentation for every expense on their travel reimbursement request. Previously, only receipts for types of certain expenses or over a specified amount were required. Employees traveling by vehicle must choose the most cost effective option: fleet vehicle, rental or personal vehicle. In addition, the mileage reimbursement rate for personal vehicles was reduced. These improvements will save a projected \$2 million each year.

Tracy Henry, Department of Public Welfare Electronic Transcript Process

The Department of Public Welfare and Commonwealth Court are working together to streamline the process of transmitting case files related to benefits eligibility appeals. The Bureau of Hearings and Appeals receives 78,000 appeals annually. For the bureau's staff, this meant photocopying hundreds of documents and then collating, organizing and packing them into boxes to be sent to Commonwealth Court.

Since July 2011, DPW has been sending transcripts electronically and plans are underway to go fully paperless this August. Once complete, this innovation will reduce staff time devoted to preparing case files by an estimated 80 hours per month and reduce the time to get files to Commonwealth Court from eight weeks to less than one week.

Robin Rothermel and Heather Stafford, Department of Health Participating Provider Agreement Redesign

The Department of Health has gained efficiencies in programs to fight sexually transmitted diseases that will allow it to help more Pennsylvanians.

The Bureau of Communicable Diseases restructured the participating provider agreements it uses to reimburse health care providers for specific services. The new contracts allow providers to accept payments from a patient's insurance company, instead of always seeking payment from the state.

Bureau staff worked with a local provider on a one-year pilot of the new agreements that produced annual savings of 24 percent, or approximately \$200,000. These savings will be used to provide preventive services to those who would otherwise be unable to afford them.

"In many cases, innovations in one department can be used to address similar challenges in other areas," said Corbett. "The Governor's Innovation Office will make sure that successful ideas are shared across agencies so that we can multiply their benefits."

The awards are administered by the Governor's Innovation Office, housed in the Office of Administration. Established by executive order in March, the office works with state agencies to improve efficiency and productivity in state government operations. There are currently over 130 innovation initiatives in progress, including recommendations by the Governor's Advisory Council on Privatization and Innovation.

Governor Corbett also announced a new website at www.innovation.pa.gov where the public can learn more about innovation in state government and submit their own ideas through an online form.

Media contact: Dan Egan, Office of Administration, 717-772-4237

###