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From: egg@dca.state.nj.us [mailto:egg@dca.state.nj.us]
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2009 1:55 PM
To: Lashway, Lisa
Subject: GovConnect Update: February 9, 2009

Dear GovConnect Colleague:

Take a few minutes to catch up on and review what's been going on in local government. Remember to check all three sections: News Items, Training and Conferences, and Reminders.

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New Items:

1. The Division has completed the update of the Budget, AFS, and ADS forms. They are now posted on our website at www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/fiscal/budmenu.shtml#CYBudInfo. None of these forms are designed for submission via e-mail. All require live signatures and sending a hard copy to the Division.
2. With the upcoming election, Fire District Commissioner's need to be certain that the "Amount To Be Raised By Taxation To Support The District Budget" is the SAME amount when you report it on each of the following documents:
 - A) The Adopted Budget: Page 5, Line R-5
 - B) The "Results of Annual Election" form that MUST be submitted to the Division of Local Government Services immediately after the election.
 - C) The amount certified by the Fire District to the Tax Assessor of the municipality including the tax rate information.
3. Under the National Women's History Project's (NWHP) 2009 Women's History Month theme, Women Taking the Lead to Save our Planet, please join the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in honoring the remarkable women that have impacted our history by designating March 2009 as Women's History Month in your municipality. For your convenience, attached please find a "Women's History Month" sample resolution. For additional information you can contact Ifeanyi Pole with the New Jersey Division on Women at (609) 292-8840.
4. Governor Corzine recently enacted the "Energy Saving Improvement Program" law (A-1185/S-1537) that makes new provisions for implementing energy savings improvements to public facilities and using the value of the energy savings to pay for them. While the law takes effect in mid-March, the Division will be providing introductory information about it shortly. Also, watch for seminars on issue as well.
5. The following information concerns actions local officials can take to help homeowners that are facing foreclosure or other housing related problems facing residents:
 - Foreclosure Fast Facts: A 2-page listing of assistance, numbers to call, and general assistance, including counseling agencies experienced in foreclosure: <http://www.nj.gov/dca/hmfa/foreclosurepreventionresources.pdf>

- The Mayor's Combat Kit - Materials and sources of information on buying a home, mortgage assistance and foreclosure, designed especially for Mayors: <http://www.state.nj.us/dobi/njhope/mayorkit.html>

- The NJ HOPE (Home Ownership Preservation Effort) website provides information about resources that are available for homeowners who are delinquent in their mortgage payments, need counseling or have questions: <http://www.state.nj.us/dobi/njhope/>

Training and Conferences:

1. Monmouth University is offering a half day seminar on "Thinking Inside the Box" - a discussion of guiding principles for state and local government finance. The seminar will focus on the tensions between the practical and ideal approaches to financial disclosure, public approval of debt, reporting of liabilities and the struggle to pay current expenditures. Speakers include Governor James J. Florio, former Director of Pensions Douglas Forrester, former Treasurer John McCormac, and DLGS Deputy Director Marc Pfeiffer. The free seminar will be held from 9:00am - 12:00pm on Wednesday, February 11, 2009 in West Long Branch. The seminar has been approved for CEUs. To register, contact 732-263-5860 or polling@monmouth.edu. For more information: <http://www.monmouth.edu/polling/admin/polls/InsideBox.pdf>

2. Managing Government E-mail Risk and How to Solve Them: The League of Municipalities and NJ-GMIS (the Association of Government Technology Professionals) will be presenting this new program on February 24 and 26. This event will examine how to manage e-mail when it comes to OPRA, records retention, and the new E-Discovery rules. It will also cover solutions for all sizes and ways of managing e-mail: from using your local cable company, hosted systems like G-mail, locally run Exchange systems, and large enterprise systems with hundreds of users. The program will also include time for attendees to discuss their own solutions, and will also have vendors displaying technology.

The dates are Tuesday, February 24, 2009 at the PNC Bank Arts Center; and Thursday, February 26, 2009 at The Enterprise Center at Burlington County College in Mt. Laurel. CMFO/CCFO, CPWM, RMC, CPA/RMA, RPPO/RPPS, and CRP earn valuable continuing education units. Registration, Continental Breakfast, and Networking begin at 8:30 a.m., with the seminar starting at 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Get registration information at www.njslom.org/cal022409_022609.html.

Reminders:

1. Several recent newspaper reports have highlighted that some local units are using online services to facilitate registration of individuals in local programs. These programs may also involve the payment and processing of fees. At least one firm engaging in the process on the west coast recently ceased business leaving obligations to local governments unpaid. The Division addressed best practices for these policies a number of years ago in an E-Government for Government bulletin (EGG #5 at <http://www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/egg/eggs/egg-5-2001.pdf>). While the businesses have evolved, a review of that Notice finds its guidance still intact and useful.

2. Recent Local Finance Notices:

- 2009-2 (www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/lfns/09lfns/2009-2.doc) reviews the Local Finance Board's recent approval to modify several statutory budget deadlines. The changes modify the statutory dates for introduction and adoption. They also extend the date for holding a budget cap referendum and modify the dates for actions related to the referendum. The schedule includes provisions for the "early" and "late" Property Tax Levy Cap referendums.

- 2009-3 (www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/lfns/09lfns/2009-3.doc) discusses the recently enacted P.L. 2008, c. 72 that affects officials required to file Financial Disclosure Statements under the Local Government Ethics Law. The law requires NEW office holders to file an FDS within 30 days of taking office. This applies to officials that took office on January 1, 2009.

- 2008-20 (www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/lfns/08lfns/2008-20.doc) "Contracting for Renewable Energy Services - P.L. 2008, c. 83" covers important public contracting and implementation issues of this new law that promotes local government use of solar and related renewable energy activities. It also references the new Local Government Energy Audit program administered by the BPU as a preliminary step to implementing solar programs. Any local unit considering installation of solar panels should review this Notice.

3. Does your organization pay attention to employee safety? If you do, you may be eligible for the 81st Annual Governor's Occupational Safety and Health Awards. The Program honors employers with outstanding safety records and practices. Applying is free for government agencies. Should your organization apply for an award? See the Department of Labor and Workforce Development website at <http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/index.shtml> for complete details. For questions, please contact Joyce Crea at (609) 984-4738 or by email at jcrea@dol.state.nj.us.

4. Local Government Energy Audit Grant Program: The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities has announced the launch of a new program aimed at assisting local governments in identifying opportunities for energy efficiency. The Local Government Energy Audit Program is open to public buildings owned by local government agencies and will provide funding for investment-grade energy audits from one of five pre-qualified energy auditing firms. All local governments located within the service territory of at least one of New Jersey's public utility companies are eligible. Details and examples outlining the incentive payment process are provided on the New Jersey Clean Energy Program Web site at www.NJCleanEnergy.com/ssb.

5. The DEP Bulletin contains a list of construction permit applications recently filed or acted upon by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The latest issue was released January 28, 2009. This issue can be viewed online at: www.nj.gov/dep/bulletin/bu2009_0128.pdf.

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