



School District of Lancaster: Smart Precaution!

Parents of School District of Lancaster students received a recorded phone message yesterday and an announcement was posted on the District's web site:

"Schools will open on time Friday morning, January 16; however, due to the extreme temperatures expected, students who arrive up to two hours late for school will not be marked as tardy."

Opening the schools at the regular hours provide a warm and secure environment for the

many homeless youngsters and younger children whose parents must go to work.

Permitting late arrival safeguarded other youngsters who walk long distances and may not have clothing appropriate for extremely cold weather.

At 7:00 AM on Friday the temperature hovered around 5 degrees and felt like 10 below!

Superintendent Pedro Rivera and his team deserve credit for their sensitivity and proactive actions on behalf of all of the students.

Exposure to needs of convicts leads to Justice and Mercy

In the past, friends would hardly have perceived Republic Committeeman Tom Zeager as a 'reformer' and, indeed when his bishop urged him to undertake a study of transitional housing for prisoners, he initially was unsympathetic to this cause. And then his eyes got opened.

The result a decade later is the expanding not-for-profit Justice & Mercy organization providing guidance and referrals statewide for reintegration into the community for hundreds of clients.

Zeager explained to *NewsLanc*: *"When you are convicted of a sex offense, you are required to have a 'home plan' when you complete your sentence. If you sentence is 2 to 4 years, quite often you are eligible for parole at 2 years, but if you don't have a home plan you have to max out.*

"And when you max out, if you still don't have a home plan, you get released but re-arrested as you exit for not having a home plan and you get taken back to the local jail and charged with failure for not having a home plan," according to Zeager.

Zeager describes his Odyssey in outlook: *"I was appalled at how the poor were going to prison too many times for crimes they did not commit. I was also appalled by how wealthy people can avoid conviction or obtain shorter sentences through hiring good attorneys. And I was aghast at how the criminal system was destroying the very fabric of families that we Americans value so highly."*

The organization also conducts and participates in educational forums across the state and works with public officials, legislators, and other criminal justice and faith-based organizations to improve public policies and practices.

Zeager says that as the organization has grown, it has obtained credibility and respect. *"We are able to meet with just about anybody in the State administration and legislature."*

(Entire article at www.NewsLanc.com)

PROLOGUE TO SERIES: Authority paid million for dubious services

A search of thousands of documents, perhaps as many as 100,000 individual line items, obtained under the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know law, reveals that, primarily from 2003 to 2007, the Lancaster County Convention Center Authority board paid millions of dollars to consultants who billed up to \$350/hour, some for work they never did.

Beneath the surface, however, virtually unseen by the public, various out-of-town consultants were hired, sometimes without a contract, sometimes with vague open-ended contracts, and were paid after board members unanimously approved bills, sight unseen, month after month and year after year, without

requesting documentation for the charges.

As politicians and the Penn Square Partners, with their vested self interest to protect, constantly pushed for the \$170-million hotel/convention center, the media and the public were being manipulated by a \$600,000 propaganda campaign, paid for from tax revenues and orchestrated by public relations firms and consultants.

The first of a series of reports based on research by Jim Sneddon, former Editor and Publisher of the *The York Dispatch* and *York Sunday News*, appears this weekend exclusively at www.NewsLanc.com.

Excerpts from Daniel Logan: Million dollar mystery man

When Daniel Logan was initially hired in March 2003 as a consultant to the Lancaster County Convention Center Authority, it seemed simple enough. He was to analyze the proposed convention center's operating and marketing plan...

The contract allowed for a total payment of \$18,000, plus “reasonable expenses of Growth Business Development,” Logan’s one-person company operating out of his Medford, N.J. home. The contract specifically states it was to “be completed within a 30-day period from the date of the signed agreement.” But that was not the end of it. ...

According to Authority records, Logan was paid \$200,795.29 for the period when he had no board-approved contract.

It wasn't until June 30, 2004 that Logan submitted a “letter contract” to Ted Darcus, the new Chairman of the LCCCA Board.

For Logan, that contract with the Authority was as good as finding a gold mine. Over a period of four-years, he was paid more than \$950,000. But what did Logan actually do to earn that money?

No work products have surfaced. A member of the Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau recalled Logan coming with Hixson to some of their board meetings.

Critics who brought litigation against the Authority during this time only vaguely recall Logan and did not know what he did for the Authority...

These excerpts are from the first in a series of monthly revelations concerning the early Convention Center Authority that appear in their entirety at www.NewsLanc.com.

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