

Amity declares snow events 'disasters'

By Denise Larive, News Writer

During a meeting on Feb. 17, the Amity Township Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a "Disaster Declaration" for the snow events on Feb. 5 and 6 and again on Feb. 10-12.

Township Manager Charles E. Lyon said local snow plow drivers worked for 36 hours on Feb. 11 with few breaks to clear and open area roads as quickly as possible. He said the disaster windows closed when 1.5 travel lanes were open on the local roads.



Amity Township declared the snowstorms that occurred on Feb. 5 and 6 and on Feb. 10-12 "disasters." Above, snow in the shopping plaza off of Old Swede Road in Amity Township. News photo by Heather Tassmer

[View and purchase photos](#)

Lyon said a disaster declaration allows a municipality to apply for state emergency funds. Berks County will not receive any special Federal Emergency Management Agency funds.

Amity Township and 2,555 other municipalities in Pennsylvania will receive their liquid fuels payments one month early beginning March 1, thanks to Gov. Edward G. Rendell's disaster emergency proclamation on Feb. 6.

Rendell said the early release of the \$308 million in liquid fuels payments will "immediately assist local governments with the costs incurred this winter."

Annual allocations help pay for transportation-related expenses such as snow removal and related materials costs.

The money is generated from a portion of the state gasoline tax and from Act 44 (funds received through tolls).

Amity's disaster declarations do not absolve 26 local people of their \$15 parking fines that police issued for vehicles not removed from streets for snow plowing, said Amity Police Chief Kent A. Shuebrook.

Shuebrook said police will also begin ticketing inoperable (unregistered) vehicles parked on streets for longer than 24 hours.

He reported also that his officers have responded to 30 false alarms already this year; eight false alarms originated from one business.

The police department will begin issuing notice of assessment of a false alarm charge letters to the repeat offenders (as indicated in the township's Ordinance 210).

First and second false alarms at a residence or business within one year are issued warnings, but a third false alarm is charged \$50, the fourth is charged \$100, and the fifth is fined \$200.

The snowed-out Feb. 10 Planning Commission meeting has been rescheduled to Feb. 24, 7 p.m., at St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Douglassville.

The meeting will include regular commission business of land development plan reviews as well as discussion of the proposed Amity Township Western Industrial Park, north Limekiln Road, and of possible development of the overlay districts along Route 422.

In other business:

- The Leaf Creek Trail Study meeting will be held in the township building at 7 p.m. on Feb. 24.

The parks and recreation board is seeking public comment on the feasibility study results.

The proposed trail would follow the creek system along Old Swede Road from the Cider Mill development south to River Bridge Road and would provide a walking and biking route to the Schuylkill River Trail.

- State Rep. David R. Kessler (D-130) will hold a town meeting Feb. 25 at 7 pm in the township building.

- Board Chairman Robert R. Yanos said Southern Berks EMS, currently stationed at Fisher Landscaping, 530 Benjamin Franklin Highway, Douglassville, is looking for a permanent building location in Amity Township in order to expand its service 24/7.

The EMS wasn't represented at the meeting, but Yanos said the board would pass along some possible relocation ideas of four-room buildings for crew activities and sleeping quarters.

- Solicitor Brian F. Boland said the tap-in fee ordinance for connections to the Monocacy Creek Interceptor will be advertised for the board's adoption on March 3.

The ordinance will allow residents that connect to the new sewer line to pay their \$3,007 tap-in fee during a 60 month period at a one percent interest rate.

- Yanos noted with regret the recent death of Jake Oxenford, age 89, a former township road crew foreman and life-long township resident.

Yanos said the board could consider establishing a township memorial for Oxenford.



