

COUNCIL CORNER

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER ISSUE



End of Summer....BUDGET TIME

The summer just ended and I would like to thank the different organizations that held various events for the Greater Reading community, many of them free of charge.

Now with the end of the summer, City Council will begin working on the 2014 budget. The New Year will bring its own challenges but we are ready to face these challenges. City Council made it clear to the administration a few months ago that Council would not consider an increase in the property taxes. Instead Council would like to invest the City's assets in a more responsible manner and focus on the successful collection of delinquent fines, fees and taxes over the next year.

We are currently studying a proposal from the Administration that promotes a change in property taxes, Land Value Tax. As of today, this proposal does not have enough support from the members of Council but we are giving the Mayor time to demonstrate that their proposal has the support of groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Reading Berks Association of Realtors, different community groups, etc. It is my intention to support anything that make sense and will benefit the quality of life for our residents and promote the financial growth of our city.

On the other hand, City Council continues to work on various initiatives that promote the creation of jobs, attract new businesses and encourage the growth of existing businesses. We have to rebuild our city to promote growth and to promote growth have to make Reading an attractive city to start a business. The improvement of our tax base is a priority, which means rebuilding our city block by block. I can assure you we are on the right path!

I invite you to be part of our regular business meetings every second and fourth Monday of each month at City Hall and to stay connected to all our budget sessions, the participation of citizens is extremely important to us. As always, thank you for the opportunity of serving you!

Francis G. Acosta
City Council President



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Police Ride Along



**Councilor
Randy Corcoran
District 1**

“This experience made me truly appreciate the professional and efficient way our officials work each and every day to protect Reading.”

I was recently honored to do a ride along with the Reading Police Department and I was very honored to be the first civilian to receive the A Platoon Challenge Coin. Lt Hogan and Officer Dinger (who is also an experienced field training officer for the department) were great to work with, along with the rest of the A platoon. I ended up, through the advice of Chief Heim, doing the overnight shift on a Saturday night. I started at 11 pm with roll call and finished around 5:30 a.m. The police said that they believe that I was the first politician to do the midnight shift on a weekend with the objective of actually experiencing what the police deal with.

It was an enlightening experience. On a shift that is not always the busiest, I saw what Reading's finest have to deal with. I saw many arrests and saw how efficient the Reading PD conducts their business. I was amazed at how much work they do with such limited resources. To say that the thought of going into this scared me would be a huge understatement; however, it was not long before Lt Hogan, Officer Dinger and the rest of the A platoon had me feeling at home and comfortable.

Some of what I saw: helping a mental health

patient, helping in the apprehension of a suspect wanted in a stabbing and a suspect wanted for rape and responding to shots fired on Locust Street where I actually assisted by looking for shell casings with a flash light. The last call of the night was a traffic stop that resulted in an arrest of a woman suspected to be on crack.

Thank you to the Reading Police Department, especially A Platoon. This experience made me truly appreciate the professional and efficient way our officers work each and every day to protect Reading.

Items worthy of attention:

1) Working to get a more conclusive update on the **Wyomissing Park streetlight issue**. The lack of proper street lighting has been a problem for way too long. I will continue to keep pressing for a resolution on this issue.

2) **Streetlight at Fifth and Bingaman Streets**. Residents in this area, along with City Council believe that there needs to be some type of traffic signal or sign at this location. With the proposed detour during the repair of the Penn Street Bridge traffic control will be needed more than ever. I will continue to work with Senator Schwank, Rep.

Caltagirone and Council President Acosta to correct this situation.

3) **THANK YOU to the Masano Dealerships** located on Lancaster Avenue for stepping up to maintain the islands located at the Brookline Plaza and Hancock Boulevard intersections.

4) The **Lancaster Avenue Gateway** continues to grow and diversify. Lancaster Avenue looks like a new place featuring the new 525 Student Housing, the Hall Of Flame BBQ and Wings, Home Health Oxygen, as well as the new dance studio. More improvements and businesses are coming soon to the Lancaster Avenue Gateway.





**Councilor
Dennis Sterner
District 3**

Reading's Best Kept Secret....

The Hillside Playground Association!

The City is constantly searching for partners to help it manage various public spaces. The Hillside Playground Association has been assisting the City with the maintenance and management of the Hillside Playground, nestled against Mount Penn in the 400 block of North 14th Street for approximately 50 years. In addition to the care and maintenance of the playground, the Association offers various programs to benefit the greater community and to help fund their mission and purpose, focused on City children and the community. Their greatest and most widely loved event is the annual Holiday Light display which starts around Thanksgiving weekend and runs through the end of the year.

This event attracts thousands of visitors from all over Berks County and beyond. The light display, which stretches across the playground, is truly something to behold. Even Santa Claus recognizes this spectacular event and agrees to be on hand every year to listen to everyone's holiday wish list. It is unbelievable that in this day and age they are still able to offer this annual event at no charge.

Other popular events offered by the Association are Summer Money Bingo, Easter Egg Hunts and their annual carnival.

Over the decades, this association installed the baseball field, the field lighting and fencing at the playground with volunteer labor. The Association also takes care of all regular maintenance such as grass mowing and the maintenance of all buildings and equipment. Interested in learning what you can do to help out? Call the Association at (610) 236-0440.



OK, if you know Northwest Reading, you have a pretty good idea of our large businesses – Carpenter Technology Corp. and the Reading Fightin' Phils most likely come to mind. But District 5 contains a treasure trove of small businesses that populate the area from Sixth and Amity to Baer Park to Glenside and along Routes 61 and 12. In this issue, we'll highlight one of the oldest and one of the newest.

Let's start in **Riverside** and make a stop at **Mike's Tavern**, 135 Exeter St. This wonderful bar is located on the first floor of what was once a city row house. And it's occupied the space for a long, long time.

Mike's Tavern



Walking into Mike's is like walking into history. It seems that time stood still around mid-century. The wallpaper is ancient as are many of the old beer signs and trays, animal heads and the bar itself. But a new generation (and some of us more seasoned types) is discovering (or rediscover-

ing) a Reading treasure.

Thanks to owner Pete Cammarano, Mike's Tavern had a rebirth in 2010 when he purchased the bar from former owners the Duplak family. Pete previously owned the legendary Northeast Taproom and it was one of the first bars in the area to feature specialty beers. He sold that bar in 2003 and spent some time in Seattle and Memphis, but Reading ultimately called him home – and are we glad!

Pete and his faithful canine best pal Skipper serve as the greeting committee for virtually every patron. Pete pretty much knows everyone's name and Skip sniffs out the possibility of a dog treat which he usually gets. No one knows good beer like Pete and the variety of bottled beers and the featured taps are without compare locally.

If you're looking for a great meal, there are lots of close-by options, but Pete's is the place for an after-work beer or a delightful evening of chatting with friends or playing board games (where else can you go and do that?!)

You won't find peanut shells on the floor but you will find complimentary pretzels and the bowls to put them in next to the upright piano (yes, there is one of those, too, and recently some bargoers were treated to some 70s songs tapped out in a most unique style!)

Mike's, where you can still check out the original 1934 liquor license, turns 80 next year. Don't wait for the big anniversary to get out there!

Now, let's head west over to **Glenside** and check out one of the newest businesses, the **Oakside Care Pharmacy** at 440 Lehigh St.

Fadeke Salako is the proud owner and what a story she has! Fadeke emigrated to the United States from Africa when she was 19. She attended pharmacy school in Africa but needed to take all the licensing exams when she came to this country in order to practice here.

Fadeke has worked diligently with the city over the past year in preparation for opening the store which features full pharmacy service as well as health-related items from adhesive bandages to pediatric electrolyte drinks. She also offers delivery service. Fadeke and her husband have two teen-age children who are students in the Wilson School District. The whole family pitches in to help with the business.

The pharmacy derives its name from the Glenside neighborhood and the nearby Oakshire Senior Apartments. The business provides a critical service for this part of Reading which is home to many seniors and to the residents of the Glenside Homes.

Among Fadeke's business neighbors are the Super Saver Market (located in what had been Big John's restaurant) and Cherry's Jamaican Delight restaurant, both new establishments in the area.

Fadeke officially opened her business on Thursday, Aug. 29. State Sen. Judy Schwank, myself, and representatives of the Community First Fund were fortunate to join Fadeke, her family, and several neighbors/patrons for the festivities. Best of luck, Fadeke!!!



Councilor
Donna Reed
District 5



Oakside Care Pharmacy



Known symbol for
Bluetooth

“Public art not only showcases the creative talents of artists in a community but also adds to the attractiveness of a community.....”

Bluetooth Art

Unless you reside on another planet, you have heard the term Bluetooth. It may be in your car, or powers your headphones or remote speakers in the house. It is a protocol developed jointly by a number of companies, including Nokia and Ericsson, (both from Scandinavia.... The land of the Vikings). It allows different kinds of electronic devices to communicate with each other.

Walk across Washington Street to Cedar Street Park next to the School District Administration building, and you find five examples of Bluetooth. These five steel structures were erected in 1985 under a grant from the Fine Arts Board. They are called Our Folks, created by John Chaffee, a sculptor from Winston Salem, N.C.

The structures are supposed to represent the family of the Viking marauder, Harald Bluetooth, who was simultaneously king of Denmark and of Norway around the 10th century. And apparently, as part of this legacy he found a way to help communicate across different languages of the countries he conquered.

So from now on when you see the symbol for Bluetooth on your electronic device, it really is a representation of the "H" and the "B", standing for Harald Bluetooth, who with his family sits across from City Hall coated with a protective

layer of rust (which the sculptor intended).

Our Folks is an example of public art in the city; others include the River Speaks by the Gateway building at Second and Penn; the gate at the Exide building, Seventh and Penn; and Ruins the red structure by Riverfront Drive. We also have the Dove and the Turtle at City Park, both of which are badly deteriorated and in need of restoration. At the moment there is no one responsible for either maintenance of existing art or promotion of new public art in the city.

When you travel to other cities, like Lancaster, Bethlehem, Philadelphia, or Boyertown, you'll find great examples of Public Art. And you find some entity responsible to maintain them.

Public art not only showcases the creative talents of artist in a community but also adds to the attractiveness of a community for recruitment of new businesses and new residents who appreciate creativity and often bring good jobs with them.

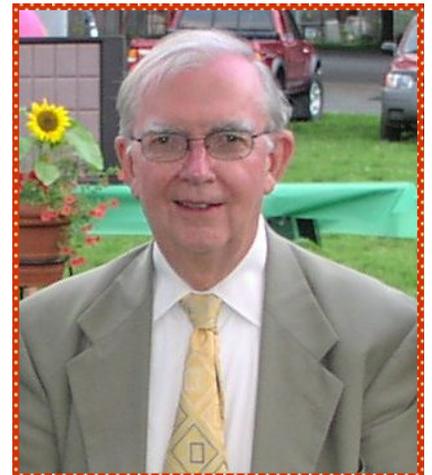
Up until 2008, we had a funding stream in place for the Fine Arts Board which was disbanded by the Re-development Authority,

apparently without consultation with Council.

We have many beautiful murals which are part of public art, but we also need structures, sculpture and other displays to enrich the urban experience.

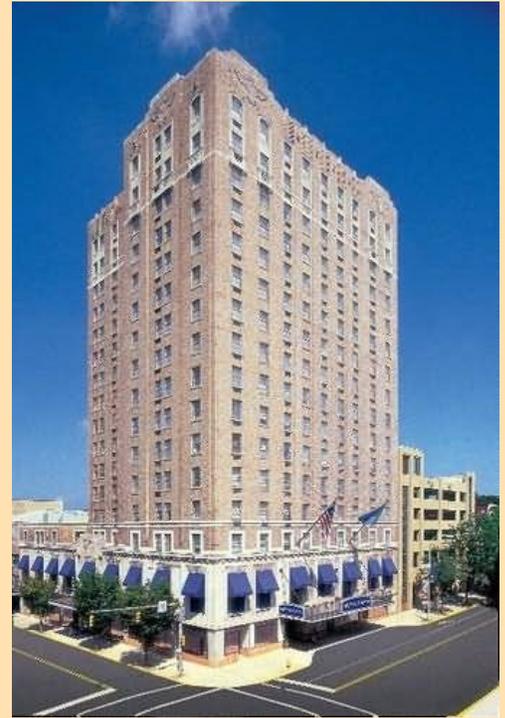
And we need some organization to be around for a long time to take ownership for the maintenance of our treasures.

Former Mayor
Tom McMahon



The Abraham Lincoln Hotel

By Alan Shuman



Erected during the Great Depression era at the northwestern corner of Fifth and Washington streets, the Abraham Lincoln Hotel still stands sentinel over modern-day downtown Reading. On opening day the 18-story “Abraham Lincoln” was proudly proclaimed as Berks County’s only grand historic hotel (complete with bowling alley and 24-hour coffee shop) and remains the tallest non-government owned building in the county. This site continues a long tradition of hospitality, replacing the Farmer’s Hotel, which had been in operation for 111 years.

The current art deco style structure (historically and affectionately referred to as “The Abe”) that replaced the Farmer’s Hotel was completed and opened for business shortly after the onset of the Great Depression in spring of 1930 and is still in operation today. It not only survived the Great Depression, but thrived for years afterward, playing host to many celebrities of the day, including First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, and world renown bandmaster John Phillip Sousa.

Most recently, the entire site (including the attached parking garage) was purchased by Shuman Development Group (SDG) in April of this year. While many readily noticeable cosmetic improvements have already been made, major renovations are slated for the next two years.

Those who are familiar with the considerable SDG track record for revitalizing distressed city real estate, will testify to the high hopes placed in the Abe’s upcoming renovations. For more than 20 unwaveringly faithful years now, Shuman Development Group has held a passion for, and specialized in, rehabilitating historic City of Reading structures.

SDG’s objective with this site is to bring the property back to its original grandeur, including, but not limited to, historical restorations of the lobby and ballroom, as well as bringing back the well-known, long- missed Abe Saloon. Additional amenities will include a grand-scale swimming pool/tropical grotto and Tiki-type bar in the former underground parking garage; expanded gym/fitness area; enlarged convenience/gift store; private VIP billiards room; and, last but not least, a Victorian Lounge with Baccarat Crystal chandeliers for private functions.

Historic renovations on such a grand scale are highly detail-oriented and require great patience and skill, but Shuman Development Group’s years of extensive experience with restorations of historical downtown sites (including but not limited to the Baer Building, the original A.W. Golden Cadillac building, and Ed Stanley Trophy Buildings) have proven invaluable for this project.

Although select areas will be closed as necessary, the hotel will remain open throughout the entire renovation process. The hotel rehabilitation is expected to be completed in 2015.

Shuman Development Group is proud and honored to restore this landmark property and, as ever, continues its revitalization efforts in the City of Reading.



SUMMARY OF THE SEWER RATE STUDY PRESENTED AT THE JULY 22, 2013 COMMITTEE

Representatives from Raftelis Financial Consultants distributed handouts of the PowerPoint presentation reviewed with Council. The Overview and Financial Plan in summary:

- Described the methodology and objectives for the rates setting process used to complete this study and prepare the recommended rate plan.
 - o The objectives are revenue stability, rate stability, economic development and billing vacant properties.
- Described the price objectives for the review of the current rates, the stabilization of the rate increases via smoothing, and the recommendation to begin charging vacant properties for sewer readiness
- Described the rate structure process.
- Described the revenue required to complete the wastewater treatment capital project and the need to increase the rates to cover the associated bond debt and avoid operational deficit spending
- Defined the revenue required to cover the additional debt service payments for the project totaling approximately \$25M in 2014 to \$50M in 2023 including the operating budget and existing debt service
 - o retaining the current rates will not create the required revenue to cover the bond debt for the project.
 - o retaining the current rates will require a much larger rate increases in both 2017 and 2018 to cover the debt service for the project.
 - o increasing the rates a smaller, steady amount starting in 2014 will provide a cumulative reserve of \$7M by 2016 for the wastewater treatment capital project to offset the larger debt service payments in subsequent years.

Sewer Rate Recommendations in summary:

- Currently sewer rate is based on water rate design based upon RAWA customers and includes a charge based on meter size and consumption.
- Create new rate structure based on sewer usage. This structure uses the size of the water meter with fixed customer charges increasing by meter size. A volume allowance in the minimum bill captures revenue for readiness to serve and level consumption charges for all customers using more than the allowance provides revenue stability by relying less on the metered consumption.
- Use rate smoothing and stabilization with first 4% increase starting in 2014 to create the reserve with low users seeing no impact and typical families seeing an approximate \$4 monthly increase.
- Adopt a 2 year rate plan and evaluate and adjust the plan after two years and review periodically thereafter.

Sample Customer Impact Analysis

Residential	Meter Size	Gals Used	FY 2013	FY2014	Impact
Vacant Property	5/8"	0	\$13.50	\$27.82	106.1%
Low Volume User	5/8"	2000	\$27.80	\$27.82	0.1%
Typical Family	5/8"	5000	\$49.25	\$53.29	8.0%
High Volume User	5/8"	10,000	\$85.00	\$95.74	12.6%
Commercial	2"	50,000	\$571.69	\$435.34	-23.9%
	4"	100,000	\$1,198.47	\$859.83	-28.3%
Industrial	8"	300,000	\$4,205.45	\$2,557.82	-39.2%



United States Postal Service (USPS) Closure of Postal Facilities

Rick Hancock, USPS Real Estate Specialist, attended the Aug. 12 Council Committee of the Whole meeting and the regular business meeting to speak about the USPS plan to relocate the North Fifth and Washington streets main facility and the North Fifth Street and Hiester’s Lane carrier annex. He stated that this is a financial decision for the USPS. He stated that he was sent to Reading to obtain input and feedback on the proposed relocation. The operations at the carrier annex will move to the Gus Yatron facility located on North 13th Street and the USPS will seek a 3000 square-foot rental space for the retail operations currently offered at the main facility located downtown. He noted that the current main facility has 56,000 square feet, which is significantly larger than the USPS requires. Eventually both facilities will be listed for sale with a national real estate firm.

Hancock explained the closure requirements and the public notice and input requirements. He stated that his presentation now and at the regular meeting mark the beginning of the closure process. He added that the process is slow and deliberate and that the USPS will do its utmost to educate the public about the relocation before it occurs. The relocation will not affect mail service.

City Council encourages you to contact Mr. Hancock with your input and comment on the proposed closure of the North Fifth and Washington streets main facility and the carrier annex at North Fifth Street and Hiester’s Lane at:

Richard Hancock
 Real Estate Specialist
 USPS Facilities
 PO Box 47497
 Greensboro, NC 27498-1103
 336-665-2848 Greensboro
 919-420-5284 Raleigh
richard.a.hancock@usps.gov



Did You Know....

ARCHIVED LIST OF READING MAYORS 1916–2011

Mayor Edward H. Filbert 1916-1919
 Mayor John K. Stauffer 1920-1923
 Mayor William E. Sharman 1924-1927
 Mayor Henry J. Stump 1928-1931
 Mayor Heber Ermentrout 1932-1935
 Mayor Henry J. Stump 1936-1939
 Mayor Harry F. Menges 1940-1943
 Mayor Henry J. Stump 1944-1947

Mayor John F. Davis 1948-1951
 Mayor James B. Banford 1952-1955
 Mayor Daniel F. McDevitt 1956-1959
 Mayor John C. Kubacki 1960-1963
 Mayor Eugene L. Shirk 1964-1967
 Mayor Victor R. H. Yarnell 1968-1971
 Mayor Eugene L. Shirk 1972-1975
 Mayor Joseph P. Kuzminski 1976-1979

Mayor Karen A. Miller 1980-1987
 (Resigned 2/87)
 Mayor Warren H. Haggerty, Jr. 1987-1995
 (Appointed 2/87)
 Mayor Paul Angstadt 1996-1999
 Mayor Joseph Eppiheimer 2000-2003
 Mayor Thomas McMahan 2004-2011



What Exactly is Emergency Management?

By Jim Conrad, Emergency Municipal Coordinator, City of Reading



I wanted to write this article as many of our residents do not understand the role of Emergency Management or the Emergency Manager.

Emergency Management has the responsibility to help coordinate and provide the necessary means to handle a local emergency. The emergency manager works in conjunction with the police, public works, EMS, administration and fire leaders to provide the necessary tools and pertinent information for them to handle an emergency situation.

The emergency manager is not a “command position” during these emergency incidents. The officer in charge will be the head or heads of the departments impacted directly by the emergency. The emergency manager is a resource and coordinator who makes sure the needs of the emergency responders are available or can get the supplies or expertise as needed for the incident commanders.

Emergency Management also plays an important role in planning for natural disasters such as flooding, weather emergencies, power outages and any other emergency that is considered out of the norm. One important function of Emergency Management is making sure that notifications to those who may be affected by the disaster have current and useful infor-

mation to help them protect in place or move to another area that is not affected by the emergency.

Emergency Management is also charged with providing an Emergency Operations Plan for the Municipality. The plan is updated as needed and reviewed every year. This allows us to learn from past events to better serve the public if another event of similar nature occurs.

Also, once an incident crosses boundaries into more than one municipality, then the Berks County Department of Emergency Management takes the lead as this is part of their mission. If there is more than one county involved in the emergency, then PEMA (Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency) plays the lead role. If the incident crosses state lines, then FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) is in control of the incident.

The common theme is all emergencies start at the lowest level of Emergency Management (Local) and can be expanded out to meet the needs of those in command.

If you have any questions regarding Emergency Management here in Reading, please feel free to contact me.

Halloween



Straddling the line between fall and winter, plenty and paucity, life and death, Halloween is a time of celebration and superstition. It is thought to have originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off roaming ghosts. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honor all saints and martyrs; the holiday, All Saints’ Day, incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain. The evening before was known as All Hallows’ Eve and later Halloween. Over time, Halloween evolved into a secular, community-based event characterized by child-friendly activities such as trick-or-treating. In a number of countries around the world, as the days grow shorter and the nights get colder, people continue to usher in the winter season with gatherings, costumes and sweet treats.

Source: History.com

Did You Know.....

One quarter of all candy sold annually in the U.S. is purchased for Halloween. The official date and time for “trick-or-treating” in the City is Thursday, October 31 from 5:30-8:30pm. Have a fun and safe Halloween!

Volunteer Opportunities...

Get Involved in Reading Government

The City of Reading has many opportunities for residents to be involved in decisions made by their local government. At this time, the City needs residents to serve on several Boards, Authorities and Commissions (BAC). Three BACs are highlighted below along with a comprehensive list of all openings on City BACs.

The **Citizens Advisory Board** is a communication tool between City of Reading officials and City residents. Members should be active in their community. Members are chosen from different sections of the City to ensure that communication occurs in many neighborhoods.

The Reading **Human Relations Commission** is the local agency charged with investigating discrimination claims and with landlord/tenant disputes. The Human Relations Commission looks at discrimination dealing with employment, housing and public accommodations.

Plumbing Board	1 opening
HVAC Board	3 openings
Police Civil Service Board	1 opening
Historical Architectural Review Board	4 openings
Board of Health	1 opening + 1 alternate opening
Board of Ethics	1 opening

Building/Fire Code Board Of Appeals	1 opening + 1 alternate opening
Animal Control Board	5 openings
Diversity Board	1 opening
Citizens Advisory Board	2 openings
Main Street Board	4 openings
Redevelopment Authority	1 opening
Reading Housing Authority	2 openings
Downtown Improvement District	1 opening
Planning Commission	2 openings
Shade Tree Commission	2 openings
Human Relations Commission	3 openings
Environmental Advisory Council	2 openings

All interested citizens should complete the BAC application form found on the City's website – www.readingpa.gov – and return it to the City Clerk's office, 815 Washington St, Reading, PA 19601.

For additional information, please call the City Clerk's office at 610-655-6204 or email to council@readingpa.org.

City of Reading Resource Guidebook Sponsorship Commitment Form

Below are the advertisement options for sponsorship of the City of Reading Resource Guidebook. Advertisement space is limited. Please choose the option that best fits your advertising needs and return to the address listed below. *All Artwork must be provided.

_____ \$255 for one (1) page (5"x8") of advertising space*

_____ \$140 for half (1/2) page (5"x4") of advertising space*

_____ \$75 for a quarter (1/4) page (2.5"x2") of advertising space*

Name of Business _____

Contact Person _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Payment is accepted by check, money order or cash. Please submit payment with sponsorship form by the _____ deadline.

Sponsorship packet should be mailed to: City of Reading
815 Washington Street, 2-27, Reading PA 19601