

GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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*The Offices of Governmental Relations
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at the
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extend warm wishes for an enjoyable holiday season!*

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Putin Anoints Presidential Successor

The political party of Russian President Vladimir Putin prevailed in recent parliamentary elections, even though Putin is not eligible to be re-elected to his position. On December 10, Putin selected as his presidential successor Dmitri Medvedev, a government administrator mentored by Putin but with little independent political base. The new Russian president will be officially selected through elections in March. Medvedev is a first deputy prime minister and the chairman of Gazprom, the Russian gas monopoly. It is widely expected that Putin will be named Prime Minister.

New U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement Sets U.S. Withdrawal Date

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari indicated on December 10 that the new security treaty between his country and the United States, agreed to in principle by President Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in November, would include a time limit on the presence of American troops. There has been a one-year extension in place of the United Nations authorization for the U.S.-led forces in Iraq, which Zebari said his country hopes will be the last, paving the way for the Iraqi government to assume its own security responsibilities.

Zebari also said that talks will begin on December 18 between the United States and Iran regarding Iraq's security.

Both Major Parties to Participate in Pakistani Elections

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, recently returned to the country from exile, said last week that his party's candidates would participate in next month's parliamentary elections, ending discussion of a possible boycott. The party of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto will also participate in the elections.

President Pervez Musharraf lifted emergency rule on December 15, six weeks after he suspended the constitution and fired most of the justices on the supreme court. Prior to lifting the rule, he enacted constitutional amendments to provide legal cover for his actions, including one that states that his legal maneuvering since November 3 "shall not be called in question by or before any court," according to Griff Witte of the Washington Post Foreign Service.

Federal Government Developments

Congress About to Adjourn

Despite significant unfinished business, both Houses of Congress hope to adjourn the First Session of the 110th Congress at the end of this week. Representatives of both houses were thought to be trying to work out the details of a FY2008 omnibus appropriations bill, coupled with a continuing resolution (CR) (called by some a "cromnibus"). Only one of 12 FY2008 appropriations bills--defense--has been signed into law. The omnibus bill would contain the 11 other appropriations bills that have not been signed into law, as well as funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the end of last week, however, a separate CR was approved (see below).

Efforts collapsed last week on the bill that would try to split the difference in funding levels in the House and Senate versions of the remaining 11 appropriations bills. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Congressman David R. Obey (D-WI) accused Republicans of bargaining in bad faith and said he will support a bill that includes the spending levels proposed by President Bush, but that would require stripping out all earmarks and many of the Administration's top priorities in order to meet the President's target. House Democrats were scheduled to complete work on the \$520 billion omnibus bill that included domestic funding that was \$11 billion above the President's request. This was half the amount initially approved by the Democrats. Thirty million for the war in Afghanistan was also included.

Following that development late last week, there appeared to be a House-Senate agreement to hold FY2008 spending to \$936.5 billion, which is \$3.7 billion above the President's budget request. The additional money would be exclusively for the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The White House also reportedly agreed to emergency spending above that top-line. The legislative package is expected to be on the House floor on December 18 and in the Senate by the end of next week.

The existing Continuing Resolution (CR) expired on Friday, December 14, and was replaced by one extending through December 21.

Energy Bill

Late last week, the Senate by a vote of 86-8 approved a revised energy bill, but only after a filibuster threat from the Republicans forced Democratic leaders to remove the bill's tax package. The tax section would have extended tax breaks for wind and solar projects, while reducing tax breaks for large oil and gas companies.

The Senate bill requires fuel efficiency standards for new automobile fleets at 35 miles a gallon by 2020, increases energy efficiency standards for appliances and buildings, and sets a mandate for the greatly expanded use of ethanol and other biofuels.

The House bill raises vehicle standards for the first time in 32 years, establishes a quota of 36 billion gallons a year for the use of ethanol and other biofuels, and requires increased use of renewable energy sources to generate electricity. The House bill also raises \$21 billion in revenue over ten years, primarily through ending tax breaks for large oil companies, while also extending tax incentives for wind, solar, and other renewable energy sources.

The Senate bill will go back to the House and, if approved, to President Bush who said he would sign it.

Political Discord for U.S. Representatives at Climate Change Summit

Political differences on global warming and climate change issues between U.S. Senator John F. Kerry (D-MA) and former Vice President Al Gore and the White House surfaced at the recent United Nations-sponsored climate change talks in Bali, Indonesia. Approximately 10,000 delegates have come together in an effort to make progress toward an international agreement to replace the 1997 Kyoto protocol. Senator Kerry met with select delegates, held a press conference, and gave a speech to nongovernmental officials, noting: "If scientists say a two-degree Celsius rise above pre-industrial levels could lead to disastrous consequences, then I think we have an obligation to embrace that goal, and you have to embrace the truth about how you get there." Former Vice President Gore accused the U.S. delegation of "obstructing progress" and said he thought the new administration would be more likely to agree with other conferees on the need for specific targets.

The Administration's chief climate negotiator, Harlan L. Watson, on the same day as the Senator's speech, disagreed with the need for setting a specific temperature rise or emissions reduction target.

United Nations officials provided a draft text of an agreement, which calls for industrialized nations to reduce emissions between 25 and 40 percent by 2020. The

White House rejected that proposal, as well as a draft requirement calling for all developed countries to adopt national emissions goals.

Representatives of the European Union threatened to boycott the climate change summit President Bush is planning in Hawaii in January, unless the U.S. accepts specific targets for carbon-emission reduction in the draft text being prepared.

The United Nations released new data indicating that the past decade was the warmest on record—and perhaps the warmest for at least the last 1,000 or 1,300 years, according the Michel Jarraud, secretary-general of the World Meteorological Organization.

By the end of the summit, delegates from nearly 190 countries had agreed on a new framework for addressing global warming, which will require both industrialized nations and developing nations to commit to quantifiable, verifiable measures. The agreement will form the basis for a two-year, U.N.-sponsored procedure that will hopefully result in a binding international climate agreement by the end of 2009. The consensus document was accepted by acclamation, after U.S. representatives were pressured into agreeing to it.

Destruction of CIA Interrogation Tapes

Senate intelligence leaders were preparing an inquiry into the decision of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to destroy videotapes of harsh interrogation tapes used on two terrorism suspects. President Bush reportedly was unaware of the tapes or their destruction until the last week or so, but former White House counsel Harriet E. Miers knew about the tapes and told CIA officials that she opposed their destruction.

Disclosure of the existence of the tapes was made by CIA Director General Michael V. Hayden on December 6 when he said his agency had videotaped interrogations of two al-Qaeda suspects in 2002. The tapes were destroyed in 2005. CIA critics are concerned that the tapes may have shown illegal interrogation tactics, including waterboarding.

Supreme Court Rejects Appellate Court Drug Re-sentencing

By a decision of 7-2 with Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel A. Alito, Jr., dissenting, the U.S. Supreme Court on December 10 restored to federal trial court judges their essential role in criminal sentencing. In the two decisions by the same majority vote, the Court overturned a sentence imposed by the appeals court that had found the trial court judge's sentence was too low—and lower than federal sentencing guidelines. By so doing, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the broad discretion of trial court judges to impose sentences higher or lower than the guidelines, which do not have the weight of law, but rather are issued by the U.S. Sentencing Commission. Previous Supreme Court cases have ruled that federal sentencing guidelines could be constitutional only if "advisory," rather than mandatory.

The two cases involved 1) a three years' probation sentence for a young man, Brian M. Gall, whose college experience with Ecstasy was followed by disavowal of drugs, college graduation, and starting a business and 2) a crack cocaine case for a Marine veteran of the Persian Gulf War (Derrick Kimbrough) with an honorable discharge whose sentence for several cocaine and gun-related offenses was the lowest possible under the statutory mandatory minimum sentences. At issue in the second case was the disparity in sentences for cases involving crack versus powder cocaine, a distinction with significant racial implications. In an unusual step, the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the original lower sentences and did not remand the cases to the appeals courts for reconsideration.

Following the Supreme Court decisions, the U.S. Sentencing Commission announced that it would permit some 19,500 federal prison inmates to seek reductions in their crack cocaine sentences. Most of these prisoners are African American. The commission made retroactive its recent easing of recommended sentences for crack cocaine offenses.

NIH Offers Revised Peer Review and Grant Making Procedures

A working group at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) of an advisory committee constituted by NIH Director Dr. Elias Zerhouni has issued recommendations on ways to improve peer review and grant making in general. Among the recommendations are shortening the length of grant applications (from 25 pages to seven pages), increasing the importance in grant reviews of the scientific effects of the proposed research, evaluating the performance of peer reviewers, providing one percent of all research funding for "transformative" research likely to "crush" scientific paradigms and establish new ones, and through a separate review process providing more grants for young scientists who have never before received one.

With respect to peer review, the working group recommended requiring senior scientists to serve on review panels as a condition for receiving certain grants. The group also proposed changing the peer-review committees of outside scientists into something akin to editorial boards of scholarly journals. The study sections would assign grant applications to specialists in the discipline to review technical aspects of the proposal, while the members of the study sections would consider the broad scientific significance.

Dr. Keith R. Yamamoto, a co-chairman of the working group and executive vice dean at the University of California at San Francisco, offered additional recommendations as reported by Jeffrey Brainard of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*:

--The study sections should provide applicants a "prereview" "based on technical evaluations, and the applicants should be allowed to provide a brief, one-page rebuttal."

--"The review panels should bluntly tell applicants if their ideas are not creative enough to merit financing, ever. Instead, study sections tend to waffle, criticizing only a proposal's technical merits. As a result, applicants then revise and resubmit applications, only to have them rejected again wasting everyone's time and sowing frustration."

--“The study sections would eliminate a 51-point scale now used to prioritize grant applications, which some scientists have said creates a false sense of [security]. In its place, the study sections would rank applications in priority order.”

More than 2,600 public comments were submitted for consideration by the working group.

Federal Reserve Cuts Interest Rates

At a meeting in Washington on December 11, the Federal Reserve dropped the federal funds rate by one-quarter percentage point to 4.25 percent, the third rate reduction this year. Since Wall Street had expected a drop of one half-percentage point, the Market plunged following the Fed’s announcement, resulting in a 290-point drop in the Dow Jones industrial average. The Fed also lowered its discount rate, the interest it charges banks for loans, by a quarter point to 4.75 percent, to make it easier for banks to obtain the cash they need for year-end obligations. The Fed also indicated that it would make additional cuts if the housing downturn and mortgage-lending crisis get worse.

The Federal Reserve also unveiled on December 12 a new plan to inject billions of dollars into U.S. banks, to encourage their lending the funds to consumers. The mechanism would be temporary “auctions” of loans to banks that will total \$40 billion in December and an unspecified amount in January.

Citigroup also announced that it would rescue seven affiliated investment funds (“structured investment vehicles”) that have been adversely impacted by the crisis in housing-related debt. It is likely to shift billions of dollars worth of securities from the investment vehicles to its own balance sheet.

Hiring and Wages Up Slightly

The U.S. Department of Labor reported last week that U.S. employers added 94,000 jobs to their companies and that the nation’s unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.7 percent. Although 125,000 new jobs per month are required to keep up with population growth, the statistics were sufficient to keep economists confident that consumer spending will not decrease. The average weekly wage for non-managerial workers increased \$2.70, to \$595.89, up 3.8 percent from last year. The manufacturing sector continued to bleed jobs—183,000 jobs in the past year.

House Votes to Prohibit CIA Waterboarding

The U.S. House of Representatives on December 13 by a vote of 222-199 approved a bill that would outlaw waterboarding and other harsh interrogation techniques by the Central Intelligence Agency, but passage of the measure prompted a threat of a White House veto. The bill requires U.S. intelligence agencies to comply with rules the Army put in place last year specifically prohibiting waterboarding and requiring compliance with a strict construction of the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners of war. The

rules, applicable in the bill to all employees of the Department of Defense, would also ban sexual humiliation, “mock” executions and use of attack dogs, and the withholding of food and medical care. Senate and Presidential approval are still required.

Members of the House from Western Pennsylvania who voted for the bill are Democratic Congressmen Jason Altmire, Mike Doyle, and John Murtha. Regional Members who voted against the bill are Republican Congressmen Phil English, Tim Murphy, John Peterson, and Bill Shuster.

Higher Ed Accreditors and Institutions Working on Compromise

A group of higher education accreditors was successful recently in having Members of Congress delete language in the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act that would have given each institution of higher education the chief authority to set the criteria used for its own accreditation review, including student learning outcomes. Now, however, accreditors and university representatives—concerned that the U.S. Department of Education may step in and set the accreditation standards—are meeting to determine how they could work together to establish a mutually acceptable set of standards.

IRS Releases Exempt Organizations Implementing Guidelines

The Internal Revenue Service on December 13 released its exempt organization (EO) implementing guidelines for FY2008, which describe the activities of the EO office this year and what it is looking forward to next year. One of its plans is to send a compliance check questionnaire to a cross-section of colleges and universities to collect information on Form 990 reporting, calculations regarding the unrelated business income tax (UBIT), endowments, and executive compensation. The information also indicates that the IRS is continuing to work toward making the revised Form 990 available for filing in 2009.

The 16-page document can be found at: http://www.irs.gov/irs-tege/fy08_implementing_guidelines.pdf.

Other Federal Developments

--President Bush vetoed the State Children’s Health Insurance Program legislation for the second time on December 12. The date was the deadline by which the President had to act or permit the bill to become law. The President’s objections are that it permits adults into the children’s program, would provide coverage for families above the U.S. median income, and that it raises taxes.

--The President did sign into law on December 12 a five-year Reauthorization of Head Start, the federal preschool program for poor children.

--Helene Cooper of *The New York Times* reported recently that President Bush wrote to North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Il, indicating a resumption of normal diplomatic relations

would be possible if North Korea fully discloses its nuclear programs and dismantles its nuclear reactor.

--The U.S. House of Representatives approved on December 12 by a vote of 226-193 the alternative minimum tax (AMT) "patch," to prevent its applicability to millions of unintended middle-income taxpayers. The offset would be increased taxes on companies and hedge fund managers that shelter money offshore. The White House indicated the President would veto the bill and Senate Minority Leader Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) said the bill was unacceptable to Senate Republicans. The Senate had passed its own bill on December 6, but it does not contain any provisions for offsetting the \$50 billion cost of the patch.

--The Senate Judiciary Committee found former presidential adviser Karl Rove and current White House Chief of Staff Joshua B. Bolten in contempt of Congress on December 13, for their refusal to testify and to provide documents in the investigations of the firings of nine U.S. attorneys last year. The committee vote was 12 to 7, rejecting the argument of the President that his staff are covered by executive privilege. Two senior Republicans—Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA)--voted for the contempt charges.

--The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission's passenger rail working group recommended a \$357.2 billion investment to significantly expand intercity passenger rail service by 2050, to remedy vehicular congestion and increase energy efficiency.

--A federal judge ruled last week that California can regulate greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, clearing the way for the state to pursue vehicular emission regulations.

--Congressional Democrats concluded a 16-month investigation into allegations of political interference by the White House into scientific inquiries and charged that the Administration edited the Congressional testimony of climate scientists on global warming—especially on the issue of whether climate change is a factor in the intensity of hurricanes. The report stated: "The White House exerted unusual control over the public statements of federal scientists on climate change issues" and has engaged in "a systematic effort to manipulate climate change science and mislead policymakers and the public about the dangers of global warming." The draft report was issued on December 10 by the Democratic members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Republicans on the committee described the report as "seriously flawed" and White House press spokesperson Dana Perino indicated the report was "rehashed rhetoric."

--The U.S. House of Representatives voted on December 11 to make permanent the national Do Not Call registry, eliminating the five-year expiration date that is scheduled to remove millions of people from the list. More than 145 million telephone numbers from both cell phones and land lines have been registered with the service. The legislation's primary sponsor is U.S. Congressman Mike Doyle (D-PA), who represents

the city of Pittsburgh. The Federal Trade Commission, which oversees the registry, said it would not drop any telephone numbers until lawmakers act. Consumers can register for the list at www.donotcall.gov or by calling 888 382-1222. There is a separate Pennsylvania registry at www.attorneygeneral.gov.

--The board of the Washington, D.C. Metro transportation system approved last week the largest increases in subway fares in the agency's history, with the largest hikes affecting rush-hour riders who travel longer distances. The subway rush-hour fare will increase thirty cents to \$1.65 per trip. The increases are scheduled to take effect January 6 and would be the first such increases in four years. There are no increases for off-peak subway fares. Bus fares would increase by a dime for cash-paying passengers. The fares are designed to raise \$109 million to help offset an expected shortfall in next year's budget and an increase in energy costs.

--Members of the U.S. Senate are hoping to have the opportunity on December 17 to vote on a proposal to provide mortgage relief to hundreds of thousands of minority and moderate income home buyers who are expected to be eligible for low-rate, low-down-payment mortgages insured by the federal government. Similar to a bill passed by the House in September, the bill would greatly expand the mortgage insurance program of the Federal Housing Administration.

People on the Move

--Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) was elected chairman of the Senate Republican Conference, the number three Republican leadership post.

--Former *Washington Post* columnist and current chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors James K. Glassman is reportedly going to be nominated as the new undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, succeeding Karen Hughes. Glassman's current position required Senate confirmation, so the White House expectation is that he could be confirmed for the new position quite easily. Glassman is also a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute think tank.

Local and Commonwealth Government Developments

PA House Amends, Passes Open Records

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives voted 191-0 last week to adopt its version of an open records bill intended to give the public greater access to documents held by school boards, municipalities and state officials. However, the bill is headed back to the Senate, where it was first passed last month. The Senate plans to review the nearly 20 changes the House made to the bill and possibly take action when they return to Harrisburg in mid-January.

The House bill would delay full implementation until 2009, locate the office to mediate disputes in the State Ethics Commission rather than the Department of Community and

Economic Development, and ban agencies from charging for research, redaction and copying time. The House added language that would permit government agencies to reject requests for documents if the person seeking the information failed to pay copying and other fees for prior requests. It would also provide greater access to legislative records, but prevent disclosure of birth dates and phone numbers in public records — a provision opposed by news organizations, and one that the Senate may disagree with. In court disputes over whether a record should be public, the House bill would place the burden of proof on the government agency — instead of the other way around.

Although the legislation still has a way to go before becoming law, that did not stop some House members from firing off press releases declaring that the vote fulfilled promises of reform.

If the Senate does not accept the House's version, it could make additional revisions and send it back to the House, or vote to reject the House version, setting the stage for a House-Senate conference committee to be appointed to resolve disagreements between the two chambers. Governor Ed Rendell declined comment on the House's changes, saying he had not had an opportunity to review them.

Both versions of the bill would reverse the law's underlying assumption by declaring that all records of the state's executive branch and local governments are public beyond a list of exceptions — a fundamental change favored by advocates of greater public access to government records and information. They also would expand the law to include financial records of the legislative and judicial branches, and also Pennsylvania's college loan agency and community colleges, and would mandate disclosures from the four state-related universities.

Current law presumes that records are not open to the public unless they fall into one of two categories: accounts, vouchers or contracts; or minutes, orders or decisions. It applies to local governments and to the executive branch of state government, but not to the legislative or judicial branches.

Senate Goes Green

A \$650 million compromise bill approved last week by the state Senate to promote cleaner energies and conservation would benefit builders of wind farms, owners of coal-fired power plants and buyers of hybrid cars and solar panels. The measure was approved 44-5 on the Senate's last day of business for the year. It calls for tax credits, rebates, loans and grants over a decade or more in an effort to cut electricity bills and pollution and make Pennsylvania a destination for the renewable and cleaner energy industry.

The energy bill would divide the \$650 million among different sectors of the energy industry, residents and business owners. The biggest chunk, \$380 million, would go to companies that produce energy, manufacture equipment for the industry or research and develop new technologies. Among the energy sectors that could benefit are wind,

biofuels, solar, geothermal and coal. Some of the money also would be available to local governments for renewable energy and conservation projects.

Another \$165 million would be available for reimbursements and rebates for consumers who buy solar panels, hybrid vehicles and home conservation items such as energy efficient furnaces, air conditioners, windows and doors. The remainder would go to low-income families, with \$100 million in emergency aid to help them pay utility bills and \$5 million in loans to homeowners to help pay for things like air sealing, insulation and energy efficiency improvements.

Republicans who control the chamber advanced the bill, which is their response to the energy platform originally proposed by Governor Ed Rendell 10 months ago. After weeks of talks, Republicans made last-minute concessions to Democrats, such as adding \$50 million for rebates on solar panels. However, the bill is likely to undergo changes in the Democratic-led House of Representatives and is already being criticized by Governor Rendell as spending too little money to make Pennsylvania competitive with other states that are trying to attract cutting-edge energy businesses.

The Senate also passed two biodiesel bills, but did not fulfill Governor Rendell's request for legislation that would also support ethanol. One bill would require that biodiesel be added to each gallon of diesel sold in Pennsylvania in increasing amounts as in-state production of biodiesel reaches certain levels. The other would raise the in-state biodiesel production subsidy from 5 cents to 75 cents a gallon—at a cost of about \$5 million—and expand an existing rebate program on purchases of gas-electric hybrid vehicles to other vehicles that burn alternative fuels.

Hazardous Clean-Up Funding Saved

The House of Representatives unanimously approved a three-year funding plan for the state's hazardous-sites cleanup program. The passage of the measure, already approved by the Senate in October, comes just 19 days before the fund that supports remediation and monitoring of contaminated properties was to run out of money. As many as 130 employees of the Department of Environmental Protection were to be laid off. The bill now needs Governor Rendell's approval, something he has promised to deliver.

Under the new funding plan, the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund would receive \$17.2 million from existing legislative accounts through June 30. For most of the next three fiscal years, it would provide \$40 million from a levy on businesses called the Capital Stock and Franchise Tax--the funding source since the program started in 1988.

Ending The Impasse

A joint committee whose task is to find a compromise on a statewide smoking ban bill was named last week. House Speaker Dennis O'Brien (R-Philadelphia) has named Representatives Michael Gerber (D-Montgomery), Ron Miller (R-York) and Robert Belfanti (D-Northumberland) to the conference committee. On the Senate side, Robert

Mellow (D-Peckville), Stewart Greenleaf (R-Montgomery), and Charles McIlhinney (R-Bucks) are the conferees.

The conferees will try to craft a bill that reconciles differences between versions of smoking ban bills that passed each chamber earlier this year. The bills treat exemptions from a smoking ban differently. At least four members must vote yes for a bill to clear the committee. That majority must be composed of two members of each chamber. After the conference committee acts, the bill goes to lawmakers on a yes/no vote.

Speaker O'Brien said there is no timetable for the committee to complete its work, but he hopes a vote can be taken in early 2008.

New Police Cars Added To City Budget

City Council last week amended Pittsburgh's \$424 million budget to shift money to buy more police and emergency services vehicles. On a recommendation from Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, council moved \$1.83 million from the police and Emergency Medical Services bureaus to the Equipment Leasing Authority. The city buys fleet vehicles through the authority.

Councilman Jim Motznik, Councilwoman Tonya Payne and Councilman Dan Deasy met with Mayor Ravenstahl about the issue recently. The increase, Ravenstahl said in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, "will allow us to better address some outstanding issues, such as the age and condition of our vehicle fleet." Motznik said the money already was earmarked for vehicles purchases, but transferring it to the authority "speeds up the process."

Police Chief Nate Harper and police union President Jim Malloy complained recently about the state of the department's fleet. At any given time, more than 25 percent of the vehicles are in the garage for repairs, and many of those cars are removed from service and not replaced. Many detective and patrol cars have logged more than 150,000 miles.

The department needs 312 cars, but has 267--67 of which are permanently out of service. The administration is buying about 30 police vehicles a year to catch up with years of neglect to the fleet.

New County Row Officers Named

The consolidation of Allegheny County row offices continues, with the appointment of two individuals last week. Attorney Kate Barkman was named director of court records, which replaces the elected positions of prothonotary, clerk of courts, and register of wills. Recorder of deeds Valerie McDonald Roberts was named real estate manager, which replaces the elected position of recorder of deeds.

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