

State Senator **VINCE FUMO**



UPDATE TO THE NEIGHBORS OF THE FIRST SENATORIAL DISTRICT

FALL 2005

Fumo Forges Plan to Save Food Distribution Center

Jobs will move to Navy Yard

Five years of intense effort by Senator Vince Fumo and his staff paid off on September 22 with the announcement that a modern new Food Distribution Center will be built at the east end of the former Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. The state-of-the-art facility will become the home of produce and seafood markets that had once considered moving their operations to New Jersey. The 41 companies involved currently generate more than \$1.5 billion in annual sales.

The project will keep nearly 1,500 jobs in the city of Philadelphia, and will eventually result in the creation of nearly 400 more new jobs.

The new facility will allow these Pennsylvania food businesses and their workers to compete more effectively with major distribution hubs located in New York and Maryland for a larger share of the rapidly growing fresh food business.

Fumo, who took the lead in developing a financing plan and finding a suitable location for the new distribution center,

Continued inside

Sen. Vince Fumo and Sonny DeCrecchio are joined by some of the businessmen from the Food Distribution Center during the press conference to announce the move to the Navy Yard. Below are artists' renderings of the site plan and the new produce terminal.



"I'm glad we were able to keep these jobs in the city of Philadelphia. It is important not only for the men and women who work here, but also for the many restaurants and other food-related businesses all over Pennsylvania who rely on the center for convenient, cost-effective service."

— Senator Fumo

Continued from front

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made the announcement at the Navy Yard in South Philadelphia, along with Governor Ed Rendell, Mayor John Street, and other elected officials. A large number of food vendors also came to the Navy Yard to be on hand for the long-awaited news. Both the current and future food distribution centers are in Fumo's senatorial district.

The state-of-the-art markets — 800,000 square feet for produce and 160,000 for seafood — will occupy 85 acres within the Navy Yard. The project, which will be funded as a joint venture between Philadelphia's produce and seafood vendors and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, will cost as much as \$100 million to construct. Rent from the vendors will pay off a large share of the amount that the state will borrow to complete the work.

State-funded road, utility and other infrastructure improvements for the food center will also help to open up the eastern side of the Navy Yard to other future economic development projects.

The Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) will take over the 30 acres where the current Food Distribution Center is situated, at the intersections of Packer Avenue with Galloway and Lawrence.

When the new produce and seafood markets are complete, refrigeration storage capacity will climb from the current 650,000 packages to 2.8 million packages.

Officials hope to break ground on the project by the end of this year. The building process will likely take up to two years.

"I would like to thank our own State Senator, Vincent Fumo, for his help, support and guidance in our effort to find a new home for the 1,500 people who work at our businesses here in Philadelphia."

*—Sonny DiCrecchio,
executive director of the Philadelphia
Regional Produce Terminal*

"Being born and raised in South Philadelphia, Senator Fumo understands the close ties that our businesses have with the city. We are often second and third generation family-owned businesses. Many of our employees live within a few miles of our plants and warehouses.

"That is why when we came to Senator Fumo with our needs, he immediately understood how important our situation was and began to help us develop a solution to our problems," DiCrecchio added.

The Food Distribution Center has been housed in an antiquated facility built in 1959. Due partly to more stringent federal regulations regarding food handling, the vendors faced the prospect of a large capital investment to upgrade their current location. Additionally, the size of their facility was not suitable to meet the needs of that upgrade, so they were forced to either expand or relocate.

In the summer of 2000, Fumo began working with representatives of the produce and seafood markets after they approached him concerning their future needs. Fumo asked them to develop

preliminary plans and cost estimates that he could use to formulate a state funding proposal.

Bio-terrorism concerns after the attacks of September 11, 2001 resulted in additional federal rules, and increased the urgency to modernize.

After New Jersey offered to find a location for the food distribution center, efforts on the Pennsylvania side intensified. Beginning in the fall of 2003, Fumo held numerous meetings in his office to create a Pennsylvania plan. The meetings included PIDC, the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority, city government, City Council President Anna Verna, state Rep. Bill Keller (D-Philadelphia), the governor's staff, and representatives from both markets.

One critical step in reaching an agreement was Fumo securing a commitment in December 2003 from Gov. Rendell for state assistance.

By the spring of 2004, the markets had decided to reject the New Jersey offer, but continued to negotiate with Pennsylvania for a new location, negotiations in which Fumo and his staff were deeply involved.

"Governor Rendell and Senator Fumo are to be congratulated for their efforts to keep the Food Distribution Center in Philadelphia."

— U.S. Congressman Bob Brady (D-Phila.)

"The center is the 2nd largest produce market in the nation. We could not afford to lose this operation to the other side of the bridge. The Navy Yard location offers the opportunity for expansion and it's a win - win for both the market and the Yard."

TreeVitalize is Growing in Philadelphia

Planting, education and many more activities

Philadelphia is turning greener under TreeVitalize, and local residents can help.

TreeVitalize is a public private partnership under the Rendell Administration's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The goal is to restore 1,000 acres of forested buffer along creeks and streams, and in neighborhoods, between the autumn of 2004 and the autumn of 2007.

Since Gov. Ed Rendell launched TreeVitalize by planting the first tree on Arbor Day in 2004, almost 2,000 large shade trees have been planted under the program in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties.

More than 61 acres of riparian buffers also have been planted along waterways in the regions. "In the year since the TreeVitalize program was kicked off we've made great progress establishing the infrastructure that will move us toward successfully reaching our goal of planting more than 20,000 trees in Southeastern Pennsylvania over the next three years," DCNR Secretary Michael DiBerardinis said.

The TreeVitalize partnership supports both tree planting and education activities to restore tree cover. DCNR oversees TreeVitalize and has partnered with: the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); Aqua Pennsylvania; Philadelphia Eagles; PECO, an Exelon Co.; U.S. Forest Service; Pennsylvania Horticultural Society; Morris Arboretum;



William Penn Foundation; Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association; Fairmount Park Commission; and county and local governments. Some of the activities include TreeVitalize Watersheds, TreeVitalize Neighborhoods, Eagles Go Green Schools, Tree Tenders and Plant a Tree Campaign.

Each county will have one or two organizations coordinating projects. In Philadelphia, the Fairmount Park Commission is the lead. This past spring 14 riparian sites in Fairmount Park were planted with hundreds of native trees.

TreeVitalize Neighborhoods provides large trees to older communities. Trees will be planted in a small geographic area to maximize the visible and measurable impact of the planting. About 40 neighborhoods throughout the five-county region will each receive 150 trees. In

Philadelphia, new shade trees have already been planted at Cobbs Creek, FDR, Blue Bell, Fern Hill and Wissingnoming Parks. Additional trees are on the way to neighborhoods who submitted requests for street and park trees. More tree planting is scheduled for South Philadelphia on Saturday, November 5, and volunteers are welcome to come out and help. (See box for details.)

Several neighborhoods within the First District submitted requests to TreeVitalize for assistance with tree planting projects. The program expects to work with the following First District neighborhoods over the next two years: Hawthorne, Bella Vista/Queen Village, Passyunk Square, Point Breeze, Fairmount, Brewery Town, Port Richmond, and Kensington. More neighborhoods may be selected as additional resources are identified.

The Philadelphia Eagles joined the TreeVitalize effort by committing trees to be planted at elementary schools as part of the team's 'Go Green' initiative.



Thanks to TreeVitalize, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society can expand its "Tree Tender" education program to residents throughout the Philadelphia region. Nine hours of hands-on training over three evenings will

cover tree biology, identification, planting, proper care and working within your community. Already more than 150 people were trained in proper tree planting and care, toward of goal of 2,000 over the next three years.

UPCOMING TREEVITALIZE TREE TENDER TRAINING DATES:

November 3 & 10, 2005

West Chester Municipal Building, West Chester, PA, and a mini-course Nov. 1 in South Philadelphia (See box below for details.) To register, contact: Julianne Schieffer, 610-489-4315 or jxs51@psu.edu or Mindy Maslin, 215-988-8844 or mmaslin@pennhort.org. Each March, Tree Tenders are eligible to purchase \$15 to \$20 'bare root' trees.

There are many more exciting projects, educational opportunities and projects to come. Express your interests by logging on www.treevitalize.net in the "Get Involved" section.

TreeVitalize will be planting about 80 trees on Saturday, Nov. 5 starting at 8 a.m.

The plantings will happen in 2 main areas:

1. On E. Passyunk Ave from Washington to Federal and on those streets connecting into that area (Federal, Ellsworth, S. Darien, S. 8th, Latona, etc.) Approximately 50-60 trees will be planted in that area.
2. On Dickinson where it connects into E. Passyunk Ave. Between 10th to 12th Street on Dickinson. Approximately 20 trees will be planted in that area.

They welcome volunteers to come out to plant that day. No experience necessary. There are many different kinds of tasks from heavy lifting to distributing water, etc.



Treevitalize will also be having a "Mini Tree Tenders" course on Tuesday, November 1. It will follow the Passyunk Square Civic Association general meeting at the South Philadelphia Older Adult Center (Passyunk at Dickinson.) The meeting is from 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Tree Tender training will commence at 7:45 p.m., taught by Mindy Maslin of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.



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Philadelphia Orchestra & Philly Pops Join Operations

Fumo plays significant role

The Philadelphia Orchestra and Peter Nero and the Philly Pops® have consolidated their administrative operations into one unit, a move that is expected to put both musical groups on a better financial footing, plus strengthen the arts in the city.

State Senator Vince Fumo, who represents the area that includes the Avenue of the Arts, played a significant role in the discussions that brought the two orchestras together.

“In today’s times, when it is difficult to raise money for the arts, it works well if you can streamline operations,” Fumo said. “This is a marriage in which they can symbiotically help each other. The Orchestra Association can enhance the marketing of the Pops, while broadening the musical offerings to an expanded audience base.”

Fumo said the move will ease financial pressure on the management of both organizations, and produce musical as well as monetary benefits for the city.

“This consolidation will help to assure future generations of Philadelphians some of the finest pops music and classical music in the country,” Fumo said. “It also bodes well for the entire city. When we put money into the arts, we get a better return on our investment than we get from stadiums. The arts are a phenomenal economic development tool. When people

go to a show, there is usually money generated through restaurants, shopping and other downtown activities.”

During a press conference on August 24 at the Kimmel Center to announce the consolidation, Richard L. Smoot, Philadelphia Orchestra Board Chairman; Sam Savitz, Chairman of the Encore

Series Board; and Nero each thanked Fumo for his efforts.

Savitz said: I want to acknowledge the role played by a tireless

advocate and activist for Philadelphia, Senator Vincent J. Fumo. Sen. Fumo has invested countless hours in shepherding our discussions, and was the catalyst and instrument that allowed this consolidation to come to fruition.”



Nero said: “There are so many to thank for making this come about, but before I can mention anyone, the plain and simple fact is, we would not be where we are today if it were not for the incredible support of someone whom I am proud to be called his friend, Senator Vince Fumo. He was the architect that put us back on the map and so much of the success we enjoy is, without a doubt, due to his time, effort and sheer brilliance.”

Smoot said: “Thanks to Senator Fumo for his leadership in reaching this agreement and for his continued commitment to the arts in this region. In recognition of his contribution, Fumo will be elected to the board of The Philadelphia Orchestra Association.

“This consolidation will help to assure future generations of Philadelphians some of the finest pops music and classical music in the country.”

— Senator Fumo

Helping Children’s Village



Senator Fumo presents a check to Children's Village through the state's Pre-Kindergarten Tax Credit Program.



New Laws Enacted with Budget

In early July, the General Assembly passed a new \$24.15 billion state budget, and along with it enacted several important new laws. Following is a brief look at some of the legislation that passed the House of Representatives and Senate, and was signed by Governor Rendell.

■ HEALTH CARE

In his February budget proposal, the governor had been forced to propose Medical Assistance cuts due to a federal funding shortfall under the Bush Administration, but the improved state economy provided enough revenue to preserve many of those threatened services. Lawmakers managed to restore all of the Medical Assistance dollars used for prescription drug purchases, and cover much of hospitals ever-increasing costs for uncompensated care. Under Act 42, there are no limits on prescription drugs, ambulatory surgical center visits, or inpatient hospital stays for Medicaid recipients.

The new rules, however, limit outpatient psychiatric services and stays at private mental hospitals. The new guidelines also require parents of children with disabilities whose household income exceeds 200 percent of the poverty line to

pay a premium for Medicaid services.

The Legislature also approved a plan to use Blue Cross/Blue Shield contributions and tobacco settlement money to expand the state's adultBasic health insurance plan for the working poor.

■ ENVIRONMENT

The Legislature approved a \$625 million environmental bond issue to be spent over a six-year period. In May, voters had approved the Growing Greener II ballot referendum to preserve farmland and open spaces, to clean up streams, brownfields and abandoned mine sites, to repair and prevent landslides and sinkholes, to revitalize older communities, and to maintain the state's 3.8 million acres of park, forest and game lands. The bond issue commits money for those purposes, and also targets \$90 million for counties to use for local environmental initiatives.

■ EDUCATION

The new state budget increases the subsidy for basic education, pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, by \$278 million, or 3 percent. It also includes an additional 2.5 percent increase in special education funding, a new \$28 million for tutoring in grades 8-12, and a \$15 million increase in Head Start that will allow an additional 2,200 children to enroll.

The budget also includes a "foundation supplement" of \$22.3 million to help poorer school districts close the gap in per-pupil spending.

Community Colleges will receive an increase of \$22.8 million, or 10 percent – their largest budget increase in 15 years.

■ BEER SALES

Beer distributors can now be open from noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays. Distributors are required to purchase a \$100 Sunday sales permit if they choose to open.

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