

CHAMBERS IS SAFE
Despite losses, PSU A.D. backs basketball coach, **SPORTS 1**

STEEL-HIGH, McD IN FINAL
Rollers upset top seed Susquehanna Twp., **SPORTS 1**

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2014 PENNSYLVANIA NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR



2012 PULITZER PRIZE FOR LOCAL REPORTING

LIQUOR PRIVATIZATION

ANOTHER ROUND?



State House committee OKs bill to get Pennsylvania out of the booze business, but such a move faces a barrier in Gov. Wolf

WHAT'S NEXT

The full House could vote on the privatization measure Thursday.

MORE LEGISLATIVE NEWS INSIDE

- » Specifics of the proposed liquor bill, **BACK PAGE**
- » Arneson says Open Records firing lawsuit is needed to preserve the office's independence. **PAGE A6**
- » Gov. Wolf courts GOP lawmakers, but Republican list of grievances grows. **PAGE A6**
- » The battle to end government collection of union dues is on again. **PAGE A6**
- » GOP leaders want caps on state spending. **PAGE A6**

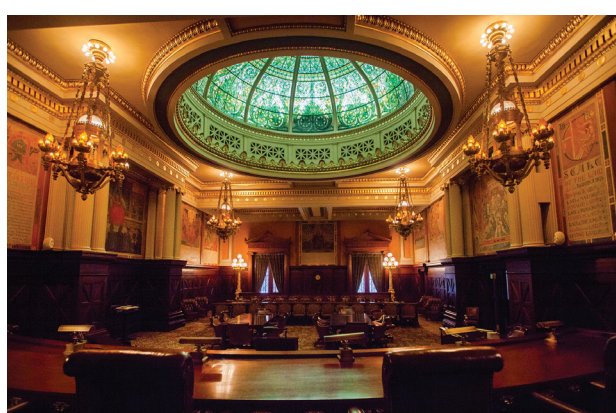
BY JAN MURPHY AND WALLACE MCKELVEY | PennLive

In its first significant piece of business in the 2015-16 legislative session, the state House of Representatives is poised to vote this week on a bill that would get the state out of the liquor business.

The House Liquor Control Committee voted 15-10 along party lines Monday in favor of a privatization bill that Speaker Mike Turzai, R-Allegheny, said is nearly identical to one the House approved two years ago.

A vote by the full House could come Thursday. "We wanted to come out of the gate in the new session articulating our agenda for moving Pennsylvania forward," Turzai said. "We think Pennsylvania has an antiquated system, and we think that government should not only not be in

Please see **LIQUOR** on Back Page



PENNLIVE, 2014
The seven-seat Pennsylvania Supreme Court bench will likely look a little empty through 2015, as Gov. Tom Wolf's nominations are stalled.

High court seats might stay open through year

One nominee has pulled his name from consideration, while another will not get a Senate hearing. Meanwhile, Wolf plans no further nominations.

BY CHARLES THOMPSON
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With Centre County Judge Thomas Kistler having removed himself from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court nomination picture, it looks likely that the state's top court will operate as a panel of five through 2015.

The seven-seat court has two vacancies because of two mid-term resignations last year.

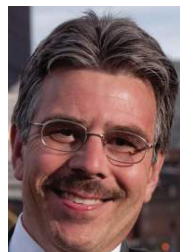
Gov. Tom Wolf had nominated Kistler and Duquesne University Law School Dean Ken Gormley to fill the current vacancies this month, in a package negotiated with Senate Republican and Democratic leaders.

That package melted down Monday when Kistler, sure to face serious scrutiny for a racially insensitive email that he had forwarded to more than 20 colleagues in late 2013, withdrew his name from consideration.

Kistler, in a statement announcing his withdrawal, made no reference to the swirling email controversy.



KISTLER
Removed himself from nomination list citing poor timing and a set of changed circumstances



GORMLEY
Won't receive Senate hearing needed for confirmation

Please see **COURT** on Back Page

Fracking in N.Y. yields rumblings of secession

The state's ban on hydraulic fracturing has some towns in economically distressed regions talking about joining Pennsylvania.

All along the Keystone State's border with New York, there are big, blue roadside signs proclaiming "Pennsylvania Welcomes You."

But some upstate New York towns might interpret this invitation as more than a tourist greeting.

There is a move afoot in some parts of New York's economically suffering southern tier to secede and join Pennsylvania.

The reason: the politically controversial but potentially economically lucrative practice of natural gas hydraulic fracturing. New York has banned fracking, while parts of Pennsylvania are said to be prospering under it.

A group called the Upstate New York Towns Association is reported to be researching the ramifications of secession. According to WBNG-TV, there are 15 towns in New York's Tioga, Delaware, Sullivan and Sullivan counties interested in packing up and moving out.

"The southern tier is desolate," Conklin Town Supervisor Jim Finch, a Republican, told WBNG. "We have no jobs and no income. The richest resource we have is in the ground."



COULD IT HAPPEN?

This week, reporter John Luciew tours New York's southern tier to talk to residents, businesses and town officials about the growing sentiment to secede and join Pennsylvania. Look for posts and photos on the secession movement on **PennLive.com**.

Legislative branch sits on \$161.4 million reserve

Lawmakers say the cushion can prevent a budgetary crisis. But an audit has resulted in criticism of the surplus system.

BY JAN MURPHY
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The Legislature and legislative service agencies closed the books on the 2013-14 with \$161.4 million in the bank.

According to an audit released Monday of the legislative branch's finances, the House and Senate and 13 legislative service agencies spent or committed nearly \$335 million of \$496

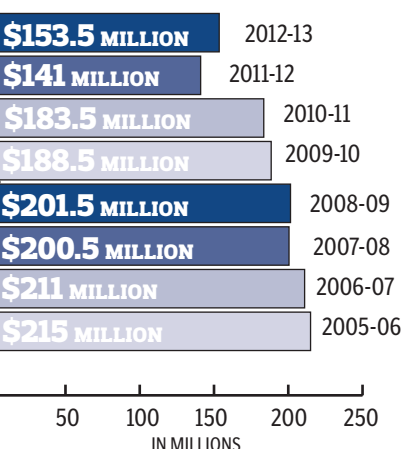
million they had available to operate those two chambers and entities in the last fiscal year.

That left this branch of government sitting on a surplus that grew by \$8 million from the prior year's \$153.5 million.

Rep. Mark Keller, R-New Bloomfield, who chairs the Legislative Audit Advisory Commission, said he expects the size of the reserves to decrease this fiscal year to make up for some of the money former Gov. Tom Corbett cut from the legislative accounts in the 2014-15

Please see **RESERVE** on Back Page

PRIOR SURPLUSES



IN TODAY'S LIVING SECTION

Find a fish fry Lenten dinner

Fish fries aren't just about getting a good meal — they're also about the camaraderie. Find a list of where to grab dinner during this Lenten season, including pierogies, mac 'n' cheese and more. **PAGE B1**



Predictable yet surprising Oscar awards

Several winners focused on issues rather than themselves during acceptance speeches, and some famous faces wowed with plunging necklines and beads and pearls. **PAGE B10**



Very cold **22°**
Weather Watch, **BACK PAGE** **16°**

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