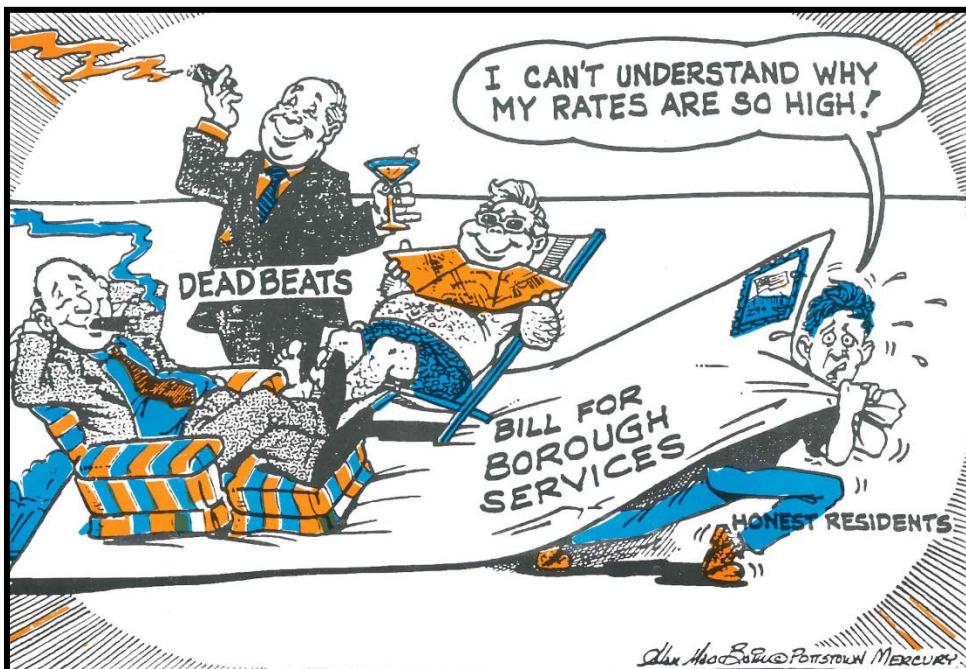




THE PORTNOFF REPORTER

WINTER 2018

REWARD YOUR RESIDENTS



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Most of your hard working residents pay their bills on time, whether it be real estate taxes or trash, water or sewer fees. Despite this responsible action, these same good citizens are often punished by the very municipalities they support in the form of increased fees and taxes resulting in part from the municipality's failure to actively collect on its delinquent accounts from the relatively small percentage of property owners who fail to pay on time.

Failing to collect on delinquent accounts sends the wrong message to those who are conscientious about paying their bills, leaving them with

the feeling that they are pulling the weight for others who are not. These bad feelings are often directed toward the municipality if money is being left on the street without aggressive efforts to collect.

If you have delinquent real estate taxes or municipal fee accounts that need to be better collected, we can help! Over 140 cities, townships, boroughs, school districts and municipal authorities across Pennsylvania have hired Portnoff Law Associates to collect their delinquent accounts. With all collection fees charged to the delinquent property owner, municipalities can significantly increase their collections at minimal cost, allowing the municipality to bring in this much needed revenue and rewarding those citizens who consistently pay their bills on time.



PORTNOFF
LAW ASSOCIATES, LTD.

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THE PORTNOFF REPORTER

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Mar.
2018

In Person

Portnoff Law Associates will be attending the Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (PASBO) Annual Conference at the Hershey Lodge (booth #438) on March 6-9. On Wednesday, March 7 from 2:00-3:00, Portnoff attorneys Kevin Buraks and Jason Leininger will be presenting a mini-seminar titled "Increasing Current Tax Collection Rates Through Enhanced Delinquent Collections." In the evening of March 7, Portnoff will be hosting a hospitality suite with dessert and drinks from 9-midnight in the Empire C/D Suite. Please stop by!

Apr.
2018

Portnoff representatives will be at the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) Annual Education Conference at the Hershey Lodge on April 22-25. On Monday, April 23, attorney Buraks will be presenting two workshops titled "Strategies to Enhance Delinquent Collections." We hope to see you at the Conference!

Apr.
2018

Portnoff Law Associations also will be attending the GFOA-PA Annual Conference at the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center in State College on April 22-25. On Tuesday, April 24, Portnoff attorneys Michelle Portnoff and Kevin Buraks have been asked to present an educational session titled "How Delinquent Collection Strategies Can Be Utilized to Increase Current Rates."

If you are interested in having Portnoff Law Associates make a presentation at your next conference or event, please contact us at (800) 561-7989.

Employee Spotlight

Jeffrey Schwartz

For the past ten years, Portnoff Law Associates and its municipal clients have been lucky to have attorney Jeffrey Schwartz in their corner. Jeff serves as the firm's in-house counsel, advising the firm with respect to legal compliance issues and handling the firm's special litigation and appellate matters. He has over 30 years of litigation experience, the last decade of which has been concentrated in Pennsylvania statutory compliance, appellate advocacy, and the defense of consumer protection claims.



municipal collections, statutory compliance, appellate advocacy, and the defense of consumer protection claims.

Jeff has in-depth knowledge of the federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and the related Pennsylvania statutes. While at Portnoff, he has handled, either alone or with outside counsel, several landmark Pennsylvania appellate cases, including a series of cases that clarified the rights of Pennsylvania municipalities to collect local real estate taxes independent of the county tax claim bureaus.

Jeff received his law degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Law. In his spare time, he teaches two weekly adult education classes and is an aficionado of jazz, baseball and mystery fiction.

Note of Appreciation

Portnoff Law Associates frequently receives thank you notes from property owners who appreciate the professional manner and courtesy with which they were treated during the collection process. The following is a note of appreciation that we recently received:

Thank you to everyone at Portnoff for always working with us. It's upsetting when you have things happen in life that are out of your control that you end up having to struggle to get done what needs to be. Your staff has always been understanding and it has been truly appreciated throughout the years. I hope you all have Happy Holidays.

A property owner from
Easton, PA

The Erosion of Local Control

Legislative Update

For those closely watching the actions taken in Harrisburg over the last year or two, there has been a recent trend to shift control away from local school districts and municipalities to the state itself. For years, Pennsylvania has imposed unfunded mandates on local taxing districts that have cost millions of dollars to implement; many of which have arguably little benefit to the local residents. More recently, there have been attempts to eliminate local property taxes and replace them with more unstable types of tax increases, with all funding and control running through Harrisburg.

The need to retain local control over the ability to make local decisions that affect your residents, especially those concerning the funding of schools and municipalities, should be of utmost importance. Harrisburg does not have the time or resources to allow it to fully understand the local needs of its 500 school districts, 1,454 townships, 958 boroughs, 57 cities and over 2,600 municipal authorities. Local officials are elected by local residents to make the hard decisions concerning what is best for their schools and communities. Surrendering these responsibilities to Harrisburg is unnecessary and detrimental. Considering the recent difficulties that the state has had passing its own budget, the thought of putting broader funding decisions on the plates of our state legislators is ill advised.

It is imperative that local districts keep a close eye on proposed legislation that can erode local control and to rally residents to express their opposition to their state elected officials. If legislators believe that they will lose votes as a result of taking such action, the desire to pass legislation that shifts local control to the state will be greatly diminished.

By the Numbers

143	Number of cities, townships, boroughs, school districts and municipal authorities that currently employ Portnoff to collect their delinquent real estate taxes and municipal fees
26	Number of new municipal clients that have hired Portnoff in the last 2 years
22	Number of Pennsylvania counties where Portnoff collects delinquent real estate taxes and municipal fees
75	Number of employees working at Portnoff
10	Number of full-time attorneys employed by Portnoff

Client Success Story

City of New Castle

Two years ago, the City of New Castle hired Portnoff Law Associates to actively collect its delinquent real estate taxes. In one year, the amount of delinquent tax accounts turned over to Portnoff for collection was cut by more than a third. City Business Administrator Stephanie Dean credits Portnoff for “having a positive effect” on the reduction of delinquent accounts. New Castle Mayor Anthony Mastrangelo also has been pleased with Portnoff’s results. “This service greatly improved our collection rate. We’re at 84 percent, up from 79 percent last year.” In New Castle, each 1% of additional tax collection equals an additional \$60,000 in net income. While not atypical, Portnoff is proud of its efforts for New Castle.

Local Event Idea



PA State 8-Ball Tournament

Bayfront Convention Center, Erie, PA, March 9-11

Did you ever have dreams of stealing your daddy’s cue to make a living out of playing pool? Then you may be interested in heading over to Erie for the PA State 8-Ball Tournament, the fourth largest 8-ball tournament in the country. More than 180 tables will be set up for competition, as 2,000 shooters from across the state will compete in both team and singles events for cash prizes. Players must compete in a VNEA-sanctioned league in order to participate. Tickets are \$5 per day or \$10 for a weekend pass. For more information, go to the tournament website at: <http://www.warnercoin.com/pa-state-pool-tournament/>.

Hiring Portnoff

Portnoff Law Associates represents over 140 municipalities, school districts and municipal authorities across 22 Pennsylvania counties. Portnoff’s proven collection process can be tailored to meet your specific collection needs, and we are available to meet with you to discuss the benefits of our services. If you are interested in hearing more about how Portnoff can help maximize your delinquent collections at minimal cost to your municipality, please contact us at (800) 561-7989 or sanderson@portnoffonline.com.



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**DO NOT LEAVE YOUR DELINQUENT MUNICIPAL FEES AND REAL ESTATE TAXES UNCOLLECTED!
CONTACT PORTNOFF LAW ASSOCIATES TODAY.**

With almost 30 years of municipal collection experience, Portnoff Law Associates currently represents over 140 municipalities, school districts and municipal authorities across Pennsylvania in the collection of delinquent:

- Real Estate Taxes
- Abatement of Nuisance Fees
- Tapping Fees
- Trash Fees
- Sewer Fees
- Water Bills



Michelle Portnoff, President
Portnoff Law Associates

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