

# Council drafts abandoned auto removal ordinance

By **JIM DINO**

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Owners of abandoned autos in the Hazleton area would not be able to duck the law by moving the autos from one municipality to another if a new abandoned vehicle agreement being promoted by the Mountain Council of Governments (M-COG) is enacted.

Dan Guydish, the M-COG's executive director, said he researched state law, and has drafted a proposed ordinance which would be used for municipalities to cooperate with each other to force the autos off public streets.

"If a vehicle is tagged in, for instance, Hazleton, and the owner moves it to West Hazleton, the owner would not get a new 10 days (to remove it)," Guydish said. "Once the original 10 days were up, the municipality the vehicle is can get it towed."

Guydish said the vehicle would be towed to a central impound, no matter where the vehicle is towed from.

"It would be a secure location where the owner could not get it out on his own," Guydish said. "The owner would not get the vehicle back unless he paid all of the fees."

Those fees would include the towing fee, the storage fee at the impound and the fine for violating the ordinance – which would go to the original municipality where the auto was first abandoned.

If the auto were not claimed by anyone, the auto would be sold for salvage and the fees would come out of what the vehicle would bring from that.

Guydish said he has an idea for any money left over.

"We would have to get insurance," he said. "Anything left from salvage after all costs are paid could go to defray the cost of the insurance."

Even if the municipality didn't make any money from

removing vehicles, Guydish pointed out another value to the program.

"You will be getting a problem off your streets," Guydish said. "If you get any money for it, that's gravy. You will getting rid of one, two, three phone calls from the home it's parked in front of."

COG Chairman Joseph Yannuzzi, also Hazleton City Council president, said that by considering Guydish's proposed ordinance, municipalities will have to look at their own ordinance.

Guydish said there is definite interest in the new law by at least four municipalities.

"I've talked to a number of municipalities," Guydish said. "I've received positive input from them. They were interested."

Speaking of streets, Guydish said he is putting together a list of municipalities that want to become part of a joint bid M-COG is putting out for road salt and anti-skid materials for next winter. He is also putting together a list to bid for gasoline and fuel.

He needs the amounts to bid from each municipality by Aug. 29, he said.

Meanwhile, four area communities will be getting new welcome entrance signs.

COG members voted this week to purchase one large sign for Hazleton for \$3,264, and three smaller signs for \$835 for Beaver Meadows, West Hazleton and Conyngham, from The Sign Spot.

Guydish said The Sign Spot bid was the only bid he received for the work after he provided bid packets to four prospective bidders. Guydish said he also followed up the bid packets with phone call, but only one bid came in.

"They've done work for the (Greater Hazleton) Chamber (of Commerce) in the past, and the chamber's always been satisfied," Guydish said.