



A partnership among Keystone College, King's College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Commonwealth Medical College, University of Scranton & Wilkes University

Regional Indicators 2015

570.408.9850

www.institutepa.org

info@institutepa.org

Locations – University of Scranton, Scranton PA and 85 South Main Wilkes-Barre PA

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development at Wilkes University (**The Institute**) provides a full range of customized and objective economic and demographic research services to businesses, government entities, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations. The Institute's extensive knowledge of regional economics and economic development, combined with a rigorous and strategic approach to research, have generated a wide range of experience conducting projects such as economic development strategies; economic impact studies; surveys and assessments; grant and program evaluation, market and feasibility analyses; industry and workforce studies; and economic and demographic profiles. The Institute supports the business community, government, and regional economic development programs by producing signature economic reports as well as providing data and analysis.

The Institute focuses on providing its clients with credible and objective research to help them make informed and strategic decisions.

The Institute staff has 29 years of combined experience in regional economic development. The organization's distinctive history and structure combines practical applications with the credibility and academic expertise of a higher education institution with an applied research focus. The organization is structured as a research institute affiliated with nine higher education institutions in northeastern Pennsylvania. Over the past 11 years, The Institute has emerged as a nationally-scoped research center having served clients in several states.

Regional Indicators Forum

May 21, 2015

Agenda

9:00 AM - 9:15 AM — Welcome and Opening Remarks

Frank Joanlanne – The Institute, Vice Chairman & President, Borton Lawson
Michael Bean, President/CEO Mohegan Sun Pocono

9:15AM – 9:40 AM — Regional Indicators Presentation

Teri Ooms, Executive Director and Andrew Chew, Research Analyst – The Institute

9:40 AM – 10:05 AM — Secretary John Hanger, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

10:05 AM – 11:00 AM — Task Force Reports

Frank Joanlanne

Health & Health Care Task Force

John Wiercinski, Geisinger Health System

Energy

Bill Sordoni, Sordoni Construction

Jobs, Economy and Economic Development

Robert Luciani, Prudential Retirement Services

Housing

Charles Kasko, Wyoming Valley Motors

Education & Workforce Development

Lucyann Vierling, Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance

Planning, Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure (PLuTI)

Tom Lawson, Borton Lawson

Special Announcement - WVIA Public Media Partnership

Teri Ooms

Public Safety

Congressman Lou Barletta and State Senator John T. Yudichak

11:00 AM Closing Remarks

Frank Joanlanne

Community Based Research Sponsors

Thank you!

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Sordoni Family Foundation
William B. Sordoni

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Matthew Sordoni, Upland Corporation

Wico van Genderen, Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry

William B. Sordoni, Emeritus, Institute Founding Member,
and Vice Chairman, Sordoni Construction

Speaker Biographies

(Listed Alphabetically)

Congressman Lou Barletta

Representative Louis J. Barletta proudly represents the people of Pennsylvania's 11th Congressional District. He began his third term on January 6, 2015. Rep. Barletta was first sworn in on January 5, 2011.

He currently serves on three House committees: the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, where he serves as the Chairman of the Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Subcommittee; the House Homeland Security Committee, where he serves on the Counterterrorism and Intelligence subcommittee; and the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

In January 2014, Rep. Barletta was named a member of a special panel of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to focus on the use of and opportunities for public-private partnerships (P3s) across all modes of transportation, economic development, public buildings, and infrastructure.

Michael Bean, Mohegan Sun Pocono

Michael Bean has been with Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs since its opening and played a very significant role in the successful development, opening and operation of the property in 2005. In September 2012, he was promoted to President and Chief Executive Officer.

Previously, Bean served as Assistant General Manager and Vice President of Administration. Prior to joining Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs, Bean was employed at Harrah's Entertainment. He also served in executive positions at Harrah's Casino & Hotel, Harrah's Louisiana Downs, Boyd Gaming and Foxwoods Resort Casino in Connecticut.

Bean holds a Juris Doctorate from Vermont Law School and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Bryant College with concentrations in Marketing and Business Communications.

John Hanger, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

John Hanger is the Secretary of Policy and Planning in Governor Tom Wolf's cabinet. Secretary Hanger also served as the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) from 2008-2011 for former Governor Edward G. Rendell and as a Commissioner of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission from 1993-1998. He was the founding President of Penn Future, was special counsel at Eckert Seamans, and is a nationally recognized expert on environment, energy, gas drilling, and green economy issues.

Secretary Hanger has written leading utility and environmental regulatory decisions, enacted major environmental and utility rules, and played a pivotal role in writing and passing major legislation, such as Pennsylvania's 1996 Electricity Generation Competition and Customer Choice Act, the 2004 Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act, the 2005 Growing Greener 2 legislation, the 2007 Net Metering statute, the 2008 Act 129 initiating major electricity conservation programs, the 2008 Act 70 requiring DEP to write a climate change action plan, the 2008 Alternative Fuels Act, the 2010 Recycling Fee extension, and others. Secretary Hanger has testified to the United States Senate, the United States House of Representatives, as well as many state legislatures. He has been interviewed hundreds of times by media outlets, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, CNN, NBC Evening News, CBS Evening News, and BBC. In November 2012, Secretary Hanger announced his candidacy for Governor. He withdrew from the race in March 2014 and endorsed Governor Tom Wolf. Secretary Hanger's career has been rooted in public service starting with the Energy Project at Community Legal Services in Philadelphia, where he became the appointed Public Advocate, representing 500,000 customers of the Philadelphia Gas Works and Philadelphia Water Department in rate cases and other proceedings. Mr. Hanger received his B.A. from Duke University in 1979 and his J.D. from University of Pennsylvania School of Law in 1984. He is admitted to practice in Pennsylvania and before the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

Frank Joanlanne, Borton Lawson

Frank is a seasoned leader and manager who possesses over 24 years of experience leading operations, finance, sales and marketing, strategic planning, M&A, IT and HR teams. Frank has led a number of small to mid-size companies through the critical stages of growth, with a management style built on team building and collaboration. Joanlanne is a graduate of New York University's Stern School of Business. He is the Immediate Past Chairman of the Board of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry and current Vice Chairman of The Institute on Public Policy and Economic Development. He serves on a number of community and philanthropic organizations boards of directors.

Charles Kasko, Wyoming Valley Motors

As Fixed Operations Director for Wyoming Valley Motors, Charles Kasko is responsible for all service, parts, cashing and building maintenance throughout the dealership. Prior to joining Wyoming Valley Motors, Charlie spent 25 years in the home building industry working at both Signature Building Systems and Avis America. During his career in the building industry Charlie served as President of the Pennsylvania Builders Association, Chairman of Builder Services Inc., Life Director for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), National Area Chairman for NAHB, BUILD-PAC Chairman, Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman, Vice Chairman of the NAHB Research Center and many other task force assignments including strategic planning and other miscellaneous committees. Charlie was awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award by the Pennsylvania Builders Association in 2011. Locally, Charlie is a Past President of the Building Industry Association of NEPA, Past President and Co-Founder of the Luzerne County Housing Partnership, a former member of the Luzerne County Planning Commission and Housing Task Force Chairman for the Institute of Public Policy and

Economic Development. Charlie is also the Executive Director of the NEPA Scholarship Pageant Association.

Charlie resides in Jackson Township, PA with his wife Karen and their daughter, Hannah.

Robert Luciani, Prudential Retirement Services

Robert Luciani, Managing Director, Key Account Management at Prudential Financial is responsible for a team of Key Account Vice Presidents and the overall satisfaction of several of Prudential Retirement's largest clients. Through their direct engagement with key clients he and his team lead specialists across administrative services, advisory services, investment services, and participant communication and education.

Rob joined Prudential in 1988 and has over 25 years experience in the retirement industry. He has in-depth experience with each of the industry sub segments - corporate, non-profit, and governmental. While at Prudential, Rob has held leadership positions in Client Services, Research and Compliance, New Business Development, and Product Development.

William E. Sordoni, Sordoni Construction

William E. Sordoni is the President and CEO of Sordoni Construction Services, Inc., a construction management and general contracting firm founded in 1910 and head quartered in Forty Fort, Pennsylvania. Prior to joining Sordoni Construction, Bill worked as a management consultant for Accenture in New York City and Philadelphia and as the Director of Business Development for Saucon Technologies in Bethlehem, PA.

Bill holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Susquehanna University.

Bill serves as a board member for the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry, the Sordoni Family Foundation, Hunters Sharing the Harvest, the United Way of Wyoming Valley, the Geisinger Health System Foundation, Penn's Northeast, the Wilkes University Family Business Forum, and Wyoming Seminary.

Bill and his wife Jennifer live in Shavertown with their three young children.

Thomas Lawson, Borton Lawson

Thomas E. Lawson, P.E., P.L.S., is a registered Professional Engineer and Professional Land Surveyor in multiple states. He is Executive Vice President of Borton-Lawson, a USA Top 500 person multi-discipline Architectural / Engineering firm he co-founded in 1988. A 1972 graduate of Penn State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering, Mr. Lawson has been recognized as Engineer of the Year four times by his peers in Luzerne County.

Mr. Lawson's professional affiliations and accomplishments include: Governor Corbett's Transportation Funding Advisory Commission in 2010, Past President of the Luzerne County Chapter of the Professional Engineering Society; Past President of the Pennsylvania Society of

Professional Engineers in Private Practice; Past President of the American Society of Highway Engineers, NE Pennsylvania Section; currently serves as President of the Pennsylvania Highway Information Association and a Board member of the Associated Pennsylvania Constructors; Technical Advisory Committee member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties; a member of the American Consulting Engineers Council; the American Society of Civil Engineers, and is a Board Member of the Penn State Civil and Environmental Engineering Advisory Board.

Lucyann Vierling, Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance

Lucyann has over 25 years' experience in workforce development in Northeast Pennsylvania. She has extensive experience with federal, state, and local funding administration, program design/development, and implementation. Lucyann has served in a variety of capacities over her career: case manager, career advisor, economic planner, and executive director of a local workforce investment board. She is currently leading Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance, The Community Education Council of Wayne and Pike Counties. She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and Master of Science degree in Organizational Management from Misericordia University.

John Wiercinski, Geisinger Health System

John P. Wiercinski, Regional Vice President for Geisinger Health System, has been associated with Geisinger since 2005—first serving as the Chief Administrative Officer at Geisinger South Wilkes-Barre and then being promoted to his regional role in December 2007.

Prior to joining Geisinger, he was the President and Chief Executive Officer at Shamokin Area Community Hospital; Senior Vice President for Operations at Bradford Regional Medical Center; and appointed by former Governor Casey as the Director of Health Planning for the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

He earned a Master's Degree in Hospital and Health Administration from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, and his Bachelor of Science at the University of Scranton.

State Senator John T. Yudichak

Senator Yudichak represents the people of the 14th Senatorial District in Carbon, Luzerne and Monroe Counties. Prior to the State Senate, Yudichak represented northeastern Pennsylvania in the Pennsylvania Assembly. John services on a number of committees, caucuses and appointments. The following is a partial list: Aging and Youth Committee, Appropriations Committee, Environmental Resources and Energy Committee (*Chairman*), Local Government Committee, Policy Committee, and Senate State Government Committee. The senator is a graduate of Greater Nanticoke Area High School, Wyoming Seminary Preparatory School and Pennsylvania State University where he earned a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in American Studies.



The Institute and WVIA – A Unique Community Partnership

For nearly 50 years, WVIA Public Media has been committed to public service in our region, but in the beginning of 2014 WVIA expanded that commitment in several important ways. Our first-ever audience research project confirmed that our listeners and viewers recognize WVIA's strengths for quality, educational, informative, entertaining content, so we have adopted that "content filter" for our focus.

Then in the summer of 2014, WVIA partnered with **The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development at Wilkes University** to launch a new community engagement initiative, turning the station outward to determine important issues and to steer programming and community projects with measurable outcomes.


The first initiative brought together WVIA, The Institute and The Commonwealth Medical College. Using The Institute's health assessment research to identify the region's critical health needs and TCMC as a primary resource for clinical research, WVIA initiated conversations with regional non-profit and for-profit partners and worked internally to present an all-new outward facing "Call the Doctor" for its 27th television season. The number one goal for "Call the Doctor" is to address the critical health & wellness needs of our region, by concentrating on one topic per month. Patients and survivors tell their personal stories while doctors and other experts discuss the medical aspects of those emotional stories. Most importantly, "Call the Doctor" supplies all its viewers with direct contact to available local resources that can help those in need through their difficult and sometimes isolating health journeys. This is accomplished through phone operators during live broadcasts and a resource hub on WVIA's website that focuses on that month's health topic.

In mid-2015, WVIA TV will premiere a new public affairs magazine program. *Tuned In* will address future initiatives being explored through the partnership between WVIA and The Institute's various task forces. The issues include but are not limited to education, work force readiness, public safety, and poverty issues. This includes highlighting The SHINE program, which address the issues of juvenile delinquency and deterring gang recruitment while enhancing a child's educational experience and teaches parents how to support their children's educational experience.

WVIA's partnership with The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development is a firm commitment to produce local programming that will have measurable positive impact in the communities we serve.

The Quarterly Economy Tracker is a quarterly publication of The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development which seeks to explore economic data, trends, and issues related to our region's economy and business environment. **The Willary Foundation**, the Economy Tracker's Signature Underwriting sponsor, is a family foundation dedicated to developing ideas and projects that are interesting, creative and imaginative and which benefit communities in Northeastern Pennsylvania. **UGI Utilities**, Inc. is the Supporting Underwriter. UGI is a natural gas and electric utility committed to delivering reliable, safe and affordable energy to our 660,000 customers in 46 counties in two states. Access current and past editions at www.institutepa.org. Under the "Community Based Research" heading, click "Economy Tracker."

Spring 2015



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Quarterly Economy Tracker

In This Issue:

High Education Careers Associated with Lower Unemployment in NEPA	1
15% of Region's Families Live in Poverty	2
Home Ownership Remains Attainable	3
Selected Economic Indicators	4-7
Labor Market at a Glance	8

The Economic Tracker is a quarterly publication of The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development which seeks to explore economic data, trends, and issues related to our region's economy.



The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development at Wilkes University

Wilkes-Barre Office:
85 South Main Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

Scranton Office:
St. Thomas Hall Room 107
University of Scranton
Scranton, PA 18503

Phone: 570.408.9850
www.institutepa.org
Email: info@institutepa.org

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High Education Careers Associated with Lower Unemployment in NEPA

In 2014, a total of 240,956 people were employed and 18,184 were unemployed in the Luzerne and Lackawanna counties. However, employment and unemployment are not evenly spread among all industries and occupations. In order to get a clear picture of unemployment issues in the region, it is important to determine which industries and occupations are most and least impacted by unemployment.

The data presented here shows each industry and each occupation's share of total region employment compared with its share of total regional unemployment. For industries and occupations where the share of total unemployment is greater than the share of total employment, we can conclude that there is a disproportionately large degree of unemployment.

The five industries with the greatest positive and negative discrepancies between share of employment and share of unemployment are presented in the tables below. Management of Companies and Enterprises accounts for one percent of all jobs in the region, but zero percent of those who are unemployed. Government workers account for 12 percent of employment, but only three percent of unemployment.

The largest industry by total employment to make the top five is Health Care and Social Assistance, which represents 17 percent of regional employment but only nine percent of regional unemployment.

On the other hand, Construction had the greatest negative discrepancy. It makes up four percent of all jobs in the region, but 11

5 Industries with Lowest Proportional Unemployment

Industry (2-digit NAICS)	Share of Total Employment	Share of Total Unemployment	Difference
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1%	0%	100%
Government	12%	3%	75%
Educational Services	5%	2%	60%
Wholesale Trade	4%	2%	50%
Health Care and Social Assistance	17%	9%	47%

5 Industries with Highest Proportional Unemployment

Industry (2-digit NAICS)	Share of Total Employment	Share of Total Unemployment	Difference
Construction	4%	11%	175%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1%	2%	100%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management	6%	9%	50%
Retail Trade	12%	14%	17%
Manufacturing	10%	11%	10%

Source: EMSI

Health and Health Care Task Force

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at Wilkes University

Mission

- Improve quality of life and standard of living for residents of Northeastern Pennsylvania through the examination of health status, health care delivery, health care costs and insurance

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Purpose

- Examine issues related to public health, providers, access, and other health and healthcare issues impacting the region
- Provide insight into the health and healthcare indicators as appropriate to ensure a comprehensive, high quality set of benchmarks of health care status

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at Wilkes University

Task Force Participants

John Wiercinski, Geisinger -Chair
Cornelio Catena, Commonwealth Health Systems
Denise Cesare, BCNEPA
John Cognetti, Hinerfeld Commercial Real Estate
William Conaboy, Allied Services
Tom Curra, WVIA Public Media
Alex Hazzouri, Advocacy Alliance
Debra Pellegrino, University of Scranton
Sonia Planey, Ph.D., TCMC
Lee Saltzgaber, MD MMM MPH, Commonwealth Health Systems
Ellyn Schindler, Sanofi Pasteur
Conrad Schintz, Geisinger
Susan Sordoni, MD

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Portrayal of Project

- Studying Autism Spectrum Disorders, its prevalence, and challenges within Lackawanna and Luzerne County
- Provide a snapshot of our region's Autism challenges, limited resources, and policy implications

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Findings

- The number of diagnoses of ASD is growing in the region
- Patients "age out" of many services available
- Need more residential services, supportive housing, companion services, transportation, social and recreational outlets, and employment training
- PA needs to lift the age caps on Autism benefits

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Energy Task Force

The INSTITUTE for
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at Wilkes University

Mission

- To convene community resources to strategically plan and promote the sustainable economic development of regional natural gas resources across business, education, political and community stakeholders

Purpose

- Conduct meetings with stakeholders from the natural gas industry as needed for information sharing, issue identification, policy implications, consensus, and research outcomes
- Prepare a regional strategic economic development plan to harness the economic opportunity generated by the natural gas industry for the benefit of businesses in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties
- Convene and facilitate implementation partner efforts

Founding Task Force Participants

William E. Sordoni, Sordoni Construction* - Chair
Mike Bean, Mohegan Sun Pocono*
Jody Cordaro, SCE Environmental*
Frank Joanlanne, Borton Lawson*
Patrick Leahy, Wilkes University*
Scott Lynett, Times Companies
John Nealon, Baker Tilly*
George Stark, Cabot Oil & Gas*
Robert Stoyko, UGI Utilities*
Chesapeake Energy*
Williams*

*Research Underwriters

Portrayal of Project

- Strategy completed in 2014
- Implementation partners
- Action



Portrayal of Project

- Pipeline Study
- Cost Factor

Findings

- Opportunity
- Pipelines and natural gas access
- Costs

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Findings

- *"In a recent special report from UGI to The Institute, based on natural gas commodity prices over the past year, businesses can expect as much as 50% or more in natural gas commodity costs by locating in northeast Pennsylvania over New York and New Jersey. While these savings may change over time, users locating in northeastern PA next to locally produced Marcellus Shale gas should continue to have an advantage over those users out of state."*

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Jobs, Economy & Economic Development Task Force

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Mission

- Improve quality of life and standard of living for residents of Northeastern Pennsylvania through the formation of economic development strategies; economic analysis, case studies, and best practices related to effective and efficient government, growth, revitalization, and sustainability as well as policy implications impacting all of the above

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Purpose

- Establish best practices that have the potential to positively influence local and statewide economies and economic development to increase jobs, attract talent, and develop a more sustainable economic environment
- Educate and inform all stakeholders on the regional economy and its opportunities and challenges

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Task Force Participants

Robert Luciani, Prudential Retirement – Chair
John Blake, PA State Senator
Joe Boylan, Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber
Fran Calpin, Keystone College
John Cognetti, Hinerfeld Commercial Real Estate
Frank Joanlanne, Borton Lawson
Cindy Klenk, Senator John Blake
Lucyann Vierling, Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance

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Portrayal of Project

- Examine and compare relevant metrics that measure economy and employment
- Unemployment rate alone is not an effective measure of economic health; a multi-pronged approach is necessary for a complete understanding of the regional economy

Findings

- Decreasing unemployment rate does not mean there are more jobs
- Total employment in both Lackawanna and Luzerne counties remained over three percent lower in 2013 than in 2006
- GRP growth is not competitive
- Poverty should be identified as a major regional challenge impacting a number of sectors

Housing Task Force

Mission

- Improve quality of life and standard of living for the residents of Northeastern Pennsylvania through examination of housing stock and housing affordability

Purpose

- Creating policy solutions based on evidence and best practices that have the potential to impact legislation and beyond
- Examines issues related to housing planning and zoning, affordability, housing stock, and homelessness
- Develop/maintains a bilingual education-information best website to assist new and existing homebuyers
- Develop/maintain a web based toolkit for communities dealing with housing challenges

Task Force Participants

Charles Kasko, Wyoming Valley Motors - Chair
Athena Aardweg, SDHP
Joe Boylan, Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber
Jesse Ergott, NeighborWorks NEPA
Steven Farrell, Classic Realty
Patrick Fricchione, Simplex Homes
Lyn Kirschenbaum, U.S. HUD
Joe Terrana, Terrana Law
Ellen Watkins, KNBT Bank

Portrayal of Project

- Assess affordability and availability of accessible housing
- Assess demand for this type of housing

Accessible housing can be defined as housing that accommodates a mobility, mental, vision, or hearing disability



Findings

- Proportion of accessible units exceeds HUDs minimums
- Mismatch between type of accessible housing and needs
- Significant supply of housing that supports hearing and vision impairments
- Shortage of housing which supports mobility impairments and multiple disabilities
- Many units are age restricted. Shortage of accessible housing for those under 65



Outcomes

- Marcellus housing research/recommendations used as advocacy tool by Housing Alliance of PA that led to PA Land Banking Legislation and PA Housing Trust Fund funding
- NEPAhousing.org
- English and Spanish
- Community toolkit
 - Definition, description, summary, explanation, strategies, case studies, sample legislation or policy, term definitions, resources
- 2015 NEPAhousing.org updates and new content



Education & Workforce Development Task Force



Mission

- Improve quality of life and standard of living for residents of Northeastern Pennsylvania through Pre-K to 20+ educators and workforce development professionals partnering with business to create a seamless, high quality NEPA education system

Education is our economic development future



Purpose

- Create policy solutions for best practices
- Examine issues related to connecting educators to workforce development and business
- Provide insight into methods to increase higher education attainment in NEPA
- Educate the community on how education and an educated workforce is the most effective economic development tool the region has



Task Force Participants

Lucyann Vierling, Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance-Chair
Jane Ashton, Penn State/Wilkes-Barre
State Senator John Blake
Tom Curra, WVIA Public Media
Alexander Dawwoody, Ph.D., Marywood University
Richard Caruso, Author
Ida Castro, TCMC
John Cognetti, Hinerfeld Commercial Real Estate
Vito Forlenza D.Ed., Vito A Forlenza Associates, LLC
Cindy Klenk, Senator John Blake
Sue Kuhl, Luzerne Intermediate Unit
Dipti Pancholy, MD FACP, The Wright Center
Graceann Platukus, Luzerne County Community College
Lee Saltzgeber, MD MMM MPH, Commonwealth Health Systems



Portrayal of Project

- Research and develop a policy position on career and workforce readiness as a major component of K-12 education



Findings

- Comprehensive career readiness and college readiness require different skills and training
- Regional programs limited despite PDE 339 plan regulations – “pockets of excellence”
- Existing state regulations should be enforced
- State needs to identify specific program requirements tied to existing academic standards and develop quality standards to benchmark success



Planning, Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Task Force

The INSTITUTE for
Public Policy & Economic Development
at Wilkes University

Mission

- Improve quality of life and standard of living for residents of Northeastern Pennsylvania through examination of best practices and policy in planning, land use, transportation, and infrastructure development



Purpose

- Creating policy solutions based on evidence and best practices that have the potential to impact legislation and beyond
- Examining issues related to planning, land use, and transportation systems



Task Force Participants

Tom Lawson, Borton Lawson - Chair
Robert Luciani, Prudential Retirement Services
Lawrence Malski, PA Northeast Regional Railroad Authority
Kevin O'Donnell, CANDO
Steve Pitoniak, Lackawanna County
Nancy Snee, Luzerne County
Marleen Troy, Ph.D., Wilkes University
Rick Williams, Williams Kinsman & Lewis Architecture and Luzerne County Council



Portrayal of Project

- Follow up from prior year research on Sustainable Communities
- Assess local government interest in sustainable programming and operations
- Develop a web based toolkit to assist communities – first tool – green infrastructure
- Toolkit includes definitions, description, case studies, policy recommendations, implementation steps, and resources



Findings

- Broad interpretation of sustainability – most concerned about fiscal sustainability
- Communities ranked themselves high on quality of life and health and safety
- Intergovernmental collaboration and transportation ranked low
- Communities believe they meet the definition of sustainability - *"A socially, economically, and environmentally healthy and resilient population within a given region that preserves the needs of this generation and future generations."*



Next Steps

- Develop additional tools and resources for the communities' toolkit
- Assess feasibility of a regional sustainability plan
 - Develop framework



Outcomes

- Regional Transportation Authority - 2012 project
 - Research and policy paper regarding benefits of RTA including case study
 - Advocated concept to area transit providers
 - Adopted by providers and counties
 - Feasibility study to join rail, airport, and public transportation entities under an RTA in progress
- Infrastructure Districts – 2013 project
 - Policy paper is being used as a foundation for specific regional initiatives to be announced in the near future



A New Community Partnership



Public Safety Task Force

THE INSTITUTE
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Subcommittees

- Founders
Congressman Lou Barletta and Senator John Yudichak
- Education
25 school districts & 15 universities/colleges
- Community
16 community programs
- Law Enforcement
14 local, state, and federal agencies
- Legislative
19 PA and US senators and representatives

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Mission & Priorities

- To improve public safety in Northeastern Pennsylvania
- Lackawanna-Luzerne Regional Gang Initiative – Gang Awareness, Education, Training, and Legal Environment

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Strategic Priorities/Outcomes

- Conduct assessment on crime related to gang activity and provide a profile of various gangs
- Conduct research on gang recruitment tactics, gang deterrence, and white collar crime
- Policy recommendations on law relative to gang activity – first statewide anti-gang legislation
- Provide education, training, and information to schools and community groups

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Outcomes/Implementation

- SHINE Luzerne County
Addresses the need for programming to deter successful gang recruitment and juvenile delinquency
Reduces poor academic performance, increases in post secondary education outcomes, increases in parental engagement
Reduces incidences of generational poverty by promoting school and career readiness
Evidence-based after school, summer, and home visit academic enrichment program
Pilot program – 500+ Luzerne County children in Pre-K to 12th Grade beginning September 2015.
Wilkes University to serve as educational host
Goal to expand to all schools in Luzerne County over next 5 years

THE INSTITUTE
for
Public Policy & Economic Development
at Wilkes University



A partnership among Keystone College, King's College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Commonwealth Medical College, University of Scranton & Wilkes University

The Institute is an economic research and consulting group. The Institute prepares studies and conducts research for public, private, educational, and nonprofit entities to identify solutions and strategies to facilitate decision making that enhances growth, profitability, revitalization, and sustainability of their business or organizations.

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