

The **INSTITUTE** for  
Public Policy & Economic Development



**2008 LACKAWANNA & LUZERNE COUNTY  
REGIONAL FACT BOOK**

**THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
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The **INSTITUTE** for  

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### **The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development**

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development, formerly known as the Joint Urban Studies Center, was established to provide essential research, analysis, and consultation to cities, counties, non-profits, institutions, and businesses aiming for full participation in the new economy of the 21st century. The Institute mobilizes the resources of regional institutions of higher education to engage communities in planning that is informed by research, energized by broad participation from stakeholders in the community, and validated by successful implementation. As the managing partner in the Institute, Wilkes University is joined by Keystone College, King's College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, and the University of Scranton.

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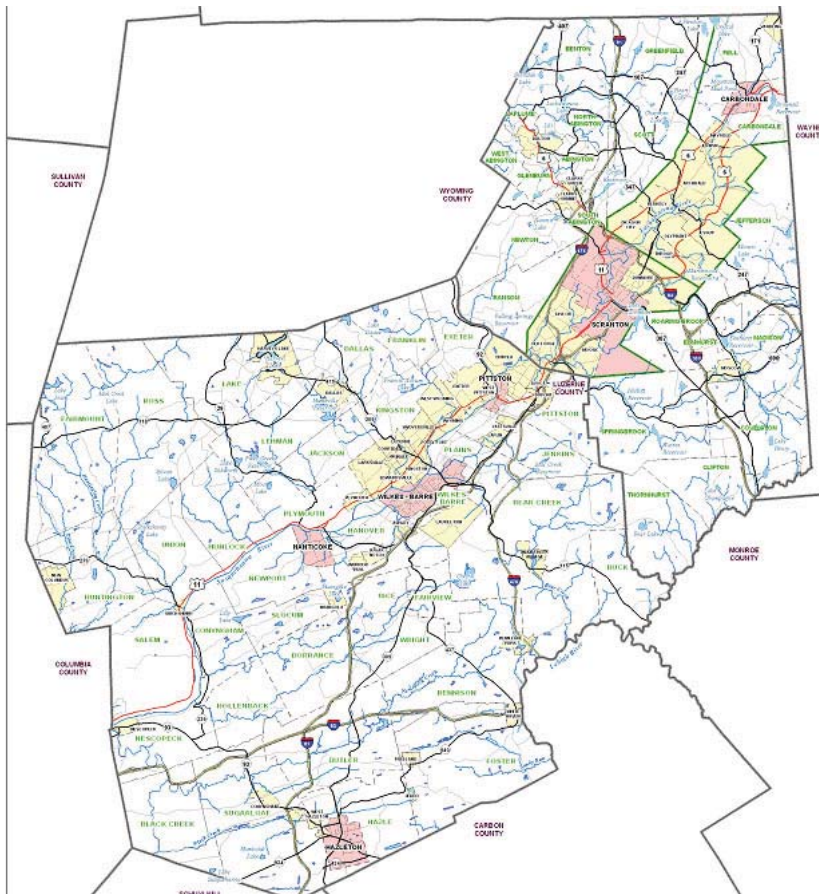
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# The Region

*The Lackawanna/Luzerne County region of northeastern Pennsylvania is growing in population for the first time in over 80 years. Recent research completed by The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development reveals that families are moving into the region, resulting in population growth.<sup>1</sup> Opportunities exist for the region's residents and those looking to relocate here, as major businesses are moving their operations to the area due to its low cost of doing business, its highway infrastructure assets, its quality of K-16 education opportunities, as well as its excellent quality of life.*



Northeastern Pennsylvania is a diverse region, which includes Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties. This region has a growing population, strong business base, extensive higher education infrastructure, and strong healthcare options. It abounds in natural and man made amenities, including outdoor recreational opportunities, arts and cultural offerings, and major sporting events. Quality of life is excellent, with available and affordable housing options at every level, public and private educational opportunities for Pre-K-12 education, and strong and effective county and local governments.

## Location

Located in the Susquehanna River Basin, Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties are situated geographically near the large northeastern population centers of New York City and Philadelphia - each within a two and a half hour drive. Each county is uniquely positioned near rivers, mountain ranges and valleys, interstates, airports, and railroads. Each county hold is within 20 minutes of their respective county seat and is surrounded



by vast wilderness and farmlands.

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties are bordered by Columbia, Carbon, Monroe, Wayne, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties.

## Size

Lackawanna County covers 459 square land miles and 5.9 water miles. Luzerne County covers 891 square miles and 16.3 water miles.

## History

Located in the heart of northeastern Pennsylvania and the former Anthracite coal region, Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties have had their share of successes, as well as hardships.

In 1786 Luzerne County was incorporated, and was designated from a piece of Northumberland County as a result of the Second Yankee-Pennamite War. Due to the county's prosperity attributable to its prominent coal industry, it became well-known for enticing immigrant workers who helped to establish its initial population. As workers migrated,



townships and villages grew into boroughs with homes built and neighborhoods formed. Due to increasing numbers of women in the workforce, the mid-1850s brought an increase in the number of factories built.<sup>2</sup> Luzerne County is home to four cities, its county seat Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton, Nanticoke, and Pittston. The remaining municipalities are classified as boroughs and townships. There are 76 municipalities located within Luzerne County.

Formed in 1878 after a lengthy dispute with Luzerne County, Lackawanna County is Pennsylvania's most recently established county. Endless miles of mountain ranges and deep valleys surround the area that is home to both Scranton – the county seat, and Carbondale. Both of these thriving cities witnessed the flourishing effects of the coal and transportation industries.<sup>3</sup> Lackawanna County is comprised of some 40 municipalities, including boroughs, townships, and cities.

Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties have much in common. They have descended from the same ancestry, dealt with the mining and manufacturing industries, and are revitalizing their downtowns. In addition, the counties are partnered as joint owners of the New York Yankees Farm Team, based at Lackawanna County Stadium, and the Scranton/ Wilkes-Barre International Airport. They have begun work on a Bi-County Comprehensive Plan and they have completed a Bi-County Open Space Plan that is currently being implemented.

Both counties include small cities, rural boroughs and townships, and the potential for growth that includes downtown revitalizations. Opportunity for new business establishments is high, with the chance for these organizations to become prosperous and grow. With dynamic new area leadership in government, the private sector, and non-profits, the counties are prospering, bettering their economies, and providing their residents a higher quality of life.

The county seats for Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties are Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, respectively. The cities are home to over 120,000

residents and are approximately 20 miles apart. Their close proximity to one another makes it convenient for residents to enjoy each city's amenities.

Two Scranton residents have gone on to Harrisburg as governors. William Scranton governed the Commonwealth from 1963 to 1967, and was chosen by President Gerald Ford as a United Nations Ambassador. Scranton also once considered a presidential run. Similarly, Robert P. Casey served as governor from 1987-1995, during which time he gained respect from the national political parties and Pennsylvanians. His son, Robert P. Casey, Jr., also a Scranton resident, is currently the junior senator from Pennsylvania and is involved in various area revitalization efforts.

The city's name was not difficult to come up with, as Scranton founders Seldon and George Scranton ran railroads through the city. Nestled between the Endless and Pocono Mountains, Scranton was deemed a city in 1806 and has flourished as the region's largest city, in comparison with the surrounding cities of Wilkes-Barre, Carbondale and Pittston. With 72,861 residents, Scranton is at the center of Lackawanna County's urban and cultural developments, and many workers commute into Scranton on a daily basis. From agriculture to mining, Scranton's booming industries enticed to the area settlers hopeful to share parts of the prize. Scranton is also known as the Electric City due to the first electric street car system being built there in 1886. Feeling the effects of World War II and the end of the mining era, the city was forced to shift its interests elsewhere. It began focusing on historical developments and preservation of grand buildings, while constructing the Mall at Steamtown, where shoppers flock, tourists wander, and jobs are available.

Home to 43,123 residents, Wilkes-Barre shares many similar attributes with Scranton, including its close proximity to major metropolitan areas like Philadelphia, New York, and Syracuse, higher education infrastructure, as well as other attributes. Bordering the Susquehanna River, its location was coined after its founders John Wilkes and Isaac Barre Par-



liament members who supported the rise of American cities. The city was dubbed "the Diamond City" because of its successful coal mining industry; once the switch toward other energy sources began, Wilkes-Barre and the surrounding region were forced to seek other business opportunities.

Manufacturing became a successful venture for area business owners, as they took advantage of the hardworking and talented pool of immigrants and natives looking for jobs shortly after the turn of the century. Retail became a player in the employment of many locals in the early 1970s, once the Wyoming Valley Mall was built in Wilkes-Barre Township, and in the 1980s Boscov's department store opened in downtown Wilkes-Barre. Wilkes-Barre has the largest downtown working population in the northeast region of Pennsylvania. It offers three higher education institutions and major healthcare providers located on the north and south ends of the downtown.

# Demographics

Demographics are key characteristics of an area's residents that classify its population by number of people living in an area, race and gender, age, income, poverty levels, and educational levels.



## Population

With 12,440,621 total residents in Pennsylvania, Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties contribute significantly to the state's overall population.<sup>4</sup> While each county has seen a decrease in population since the turn of the century, both are home to a younger generation who will, with the right enticement, settle locally and open businesses, launch community programs, and govern. Already, most members of county and city governments have lived in the region for their entire lives.

In 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau calculated Luzerne County's population at 313,020.<sup>5</sup>

White persons comprised 94% of the total population, Hispanics or Latinos comprised 3.3%, Blacks or African Americans comprised 2.4%, American Indian and Alaskan Native accounted for 0.2%, Asians comprised 0.9%, those of two origins accounted for .8%, and there were no reported Pacific Islanders.<sup>6</sup>

Also according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Lackawanna County's 2006 population was 209,728.<sup>7</sup> White persons comprised 95.4% of its total population, Blacks or African Americans comprised 1.8%, Asians comprised 1.0%, Hispanics or Latino comprised 2.4%, and American Indian and Pacific Islanders comprised practically none of the estimated population.<sup>8</sup>

### COUNTY POPULATION TOTALS

	1990	2000	2006
Luzerne County	328,149	319,250	313,020
Lackawanna County	219,039	213,295	209,728
<i>Surrounding Counties</i>			
	1990	2000	2006
Carbon County	56,846	58,802	no data
Monroe County	95,709	138,687	165,865
Pike County	27,966	46,302	no data
Schuylkill County	152,585	150,336	147,405
Wayne County	39,944	47,722	no data

Counties with population under 65,000 has no data for 2006.

Of the area's surroundings, Monroe County has experienced a significant increase in residents due to the influx of workers settling within the county and then commuting into New York City for work opportunities. Monroe County is home to the Pocono Mountain region, where the cost of living is less expensive than New York City.

Census 2000 shows that Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties' two largest cities are Wilkes-Barre (pop. 43,123) and Scranton (pop. 76,415), respectively. Both counties have projected population increases, as diverse in-migration continues with people arriving from New York City, New Jersey, and the Philadelphia area. Projected increases are based upon IRS county migration data; such increases should produce a regional economic impact not only in changing the tax base, but also when new residents purchase homes, enroll in schools, engage in employment, become involved in local government, and utilize local government services.

## Race

The 2006 American Community Survey shows diversity is on the rise in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties, as together the counties are home to 3.7% of Pennsylvania's 10.4% African American population.

While Pennsylvania's Caucasian population was estimated to be 83.8%, Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties report over 90%, which is higher than the median range. Approximately 4.2% are classified as Hispanics or Latinos.<sup>9</sup>

The region has seen a significant growth in its Hispanic population. New residents hail from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and South America. To encourage local residents to become acculturated to the demographic changes, and to encourage newcomers to remain in the region, Luzerne County has implemented a Diversity Task Force. The



task force capitalizes on the changes in county demographics and creates dialogue among all residents, regardless of culture, color, gender or heritage. The task force group seeks to foster individualism and cultural growth, accompanies assimilating newcomers into workplaces, schools, churches, and governments. The task force's efforts are especially vital to the region during this time of change and increasing ethnic and racial diversity.

The task force has been encouraged to engage in discussions with The Study Resources Center in Connecticut, which helps communities understand racial origins and stop discrimination before it begins. Luzerne County's Diversity Task Force was invited to attend a briefing to help develop problem solving techniques that could be incorporated into diversity programming. The task force now tries to practice open communication with others, expunge nepotism, and deter prejudices in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Study Resources Center issued Luzerne County a "report card" to detail how well it is incorporating minorities and women into the community.<sup>10</sup>

On October 12, 2006, Luzerne County's commissioners proclaimed its first Hispanic Heritage Day, officially recognizing those from Latin American nations. The event was conducted in the Luzerne County Courthouse, located on River Street in Wilkes-Barre, where Latin American history, art, culture, and food were celebrated. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Hispanics and Latinos comprise 1.6% of the City of Wilkes-Barre total population, African Americans make up 5.1%, and Caucasians comprise 92.3%. Figures are not available for later years.<sup>11</sup>



In the City of Scranton, Hispanics and Latinos comprise 2.6% of the total population, African Americans comprise 3%, and Caucasians comprise 93.5%.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, as of 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau recorded a 4.9% increase in Scranton's Hispanic/Latino population. A .2% increase has also occurred in its African American population, while its Caucasian population has decreased to 92.8%.

Lackawanna County's overall Hispanic/Latino population has increased

from 1.4% in 2000 to 2.4% in 2006, while Luzerne County's overall Hispanic/Latino population has increased from 1.2% in 2000 to 3.3% in 2006.<sup>13</sup> As our region continues to grow, a more diverse population will come to call the area home.

## Gender

The 2006 American Community Survey provides gender breakdowns for Luzerne County. Its data shows that 51.4% of Luzerne County residents are female.<sup>14</sup> Lackawanna County boasts a larger margin of women over men, with a 52.6% female population.<sup>15</sup>

Many notable women have derived from the region. Judy McGrath, CEO of the MTV Network, which encompasses Nickelodeon, VH1 and a variety of MTV channels, hails from Scranton. Clarks Summit native Laura Weisberger wrote the New York Times best selling novel *The Devil Wears Prada*, which was later made into a film starring Oscar winning actress Meryl Streep.

## Age

Northeastern Pennsylvania finds strength in its various age groups, with the energy of younger generations giving motivation to older residents, and older residents offering their wisdom and experiences.

Data on both counties compiled from the 2006 American Community Survey shows that 82.2% of Luzerne County residents are sixteen years of age or older, which leaves just 18% of residents under age sixteen, and 11.4% between ages 5 and 14. Also, 23.4% of Luzerne County's population is over the age of 60. This ratio is higher than Pennsylvania's over 60 population, which comprises 19.5% of its total population. Luzerne County is thus home to more elderly residents than average. Lack-



Lackawanna County ranks closely behind Luzerne County, with 22.9% of its residents over age 60. Luzerne County's child to elder ratio is 5.3:4.9, compared with Lackawanna County's child to elder ratio of 3.5:3.4 – both ratios give elders a slight edge over children.<sup>16</sup>



Lackawanna County's population is a bit more youthful, with 5.3% of its population under age five, compared with 5.0% in Luzerne County.<sup>17</sup>

According to the US Census, Lackawanna County's median age is 41.1 and Luzerne County's is 42.3. It is significant to note that Luzerne County has a large younger male population, whereas Lackawanna County is more balanced. In children ages 5-14, males comprise 12.2% of, while females make up just 10.7%.<sup>18</sup>

Where do Scranton and Wilkes-Barre stand on this scale? Both have higher estimates of residents over age 60. Wilkes-Barre leads with 24.8% of its residents over 60 years of age, which translates to 10,702 of its 43,123 total residents who are at or near retirement age. Scranton trails with 24.4% or 18,567 of its 76,415 total residents who are at or near retirement age.

## Income

It is important to consider why a person might want to relocate to Northeastern Pennsylvania, and primarily to Luzerne or Lackawanna Counties. Fast growing incomes are certainly one reason to pack up and settle in a region.

The Center for Workforce and Information Analysis, using Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry statistics, lists Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties' average family income in 2006 as \$53,600; this represents a startling leap from 1999, when average family income reached \$43,914. Of course, new businesses, minimum wage increases, and outsourcing contribute to these numbers, but they reflect much more. Northeastern Pennsylvania's residents have an excellent work ethic; local families are more apt than ever to further their careers, continue the lifelong learning process, and provide promising futures for their dependents.

New businesses and, more specifically, technology ventures have contributed to the region's prosperity. With the influx of financial service institutions and the Wall Street West initiative, local wage earners are experiencing growth in new careers and increases in their paychecks. While Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties still have room for improvement, they are gaining ground on the economy, furthering their goals, and turning dreams into realities.

Pennsylvania's average annual family income is \$60,000, which leaves Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties trailing by fewer than 11%.<sup>19</sup>

Per capita income is an important indicator because it measures the area's income growth and defines poverty rates. It serves as a focal point to be monitored throughout the span of quality of life improvement efforts.

While Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties' per capita income may be less than the state average, over the past ten years, their figures have been growing faster than the state average. Both Luzerne and Lackawanna counties have seen per capita income increases of more than 5% during the last three years.

Luzerne County's highest household income range of \$50,000 to \$74,999 was reported in the 2006 American Community Survey. While 18.7% of households were earning within that range, 15.8% of Luzerne County's residents earned between \$35,000 and \$49,999 – the second largest income group. This means that approximately 34.5% or more than one-

PER CAPITA INCOMES			
	2005	2004	2003
Lackawanna County	31,291	29,972	28,546
Luzerne County	30,397	29,195	27,816
Pennsylvania	34,937	33,415	31,892

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

third of Luzerne County residents are working tenaciously to support their families with a salary of over \$35,000 annually. Similar results are evident in Lackawanna County, where 18.4% of residents earned between \$50,000 and \$74,999 and 15.2% earned between \$35,000 and \$49,999.

In 2006, Luzerne County's median household income was \$39,687 and Lackawanna's was \$38,915. Luzerne County reported 11,322 households earning less than \$10,000 per year; the number of households in that income category decreased from 15,516 in 2000. Lackawanna County has also seen a decrease in the number of households earning under \$10,000 per year; 9,137 such households were reported in 2006, which represented a decrease from 10,022 in 2000.

With 2,224 Luzerne County families earning upwards of \$200,000 per year in 2006, Lackawanna County reported just 956. Further, Lu-

zerne County reported 2,031 households earning between \$150,000 and \$199,999, compared with 1,875 in Lackawanna County.

The vast majority of residents in both counties fall into the \$50,000 to \$49,999 per year income bracket, as detailed in the chart at the right.

## Poverty

Household Income Levels for 2006

	Lackawanna	Luzerne
<b>Total Houses</b>	<b>85,216</b>	<b>130,034</b>
<b>Median Income</b>	<b>38,915</b>	<b>39,687</b>
<b>Less than \$10,000</b>	<b>9,137</b>	<b>11,322</b>
<b>\$10,000-\$14,999</b>	<b>5,982</b>	<b>12,090</b>
<b>\$15,000-\$24,999</b>	<b>13,730</b>	<b>19,162</b>
<b>\$25,000-\$34,999</b>	<b>10,937</b>	<b>15,811</b>
<b>\$35,000-\$49,999</b>	<b>11,125</b>	<b>21,158</b>
<b>\$50,000-\$74,999</b>	<b>16,042</b>	<b>24,778</b>
<b>\$75,000-\$99,999</b>	<b>9,094</b>	<b>13,780</b>
<b>\$100,000-\$149,999</b>	<b>6,338</b>	<b>7,678</b>
<b>\$150,000-\$199,999</b>	<b>1,875</b>	<b>2,031</b>
<b>\$200,000 &amp; over</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>2,224</b>

Source: 2006 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Statistics show that in 2003, 12% of Luzerne County residents battled poverty. More disturbing is the fact that 14% of children under 18, and 9% of all families, were living below the poverty level. Of those numbers, 12% were 65 years of age or older and 32% were female headed families.<sup>21</sup> A family of four is considered to be struggling if they earn below \$19,000 annually.<sup>22</sup>

Lackawanna County is no different, with 11% of residents below the poverty level as of 2004. That percentage translates to 22,987 Lackawanna County residents living below the expected income rates, and it is a 1% (2,195 people) increase over the prior year.<sup>23</sup>

**2002 Metropolitan Area Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates**

<b>Occupation/Industry</b>	<b>Median Hourly Income</b>
<b>Management Occupations</b>	<b>\$25.76</b>
<b>Business/Finance</b>	<b>\$17.94</b>
<b>Computer/Mathematics</b>	<b>\$24.39</b>
<b>Architecture/Engineering</b>	<b>\$22.68</b>
<b>Life, Physical, Social Sciences</b>	<b>\$21.59</b>
<b>Community/Social Services</b>	<b>\$13.01</b>
<b>Legal</b>	<b>\$18.10</b>
<b>Education, Training, Library</b>	<b>\$19.15</b>
<b>Art, Design, Entertainment, Sports, Media</b>	<b>\$13.33</b>
<b>Healthcare Practitioners/Technical Workers</b>	<b>\$17.92</b>
<b>Healthcare Support Occupations</b>	<b>\$9.90</b>
<b>Protective Service Occupations</b>	<b>\$13.06</b>
<b>Food Preparation and Serving</b>	<b>\$6.85</b>
<b>Building, Grounds, Cleaning</b>	<b>\$8.62</b>
<b>Personal Care/Service Occupations</b>	<b>\$7.67</b>
<b>Sales/Related Occupations</b>	<b>\$8.60</b>
<b>Office/Administrative Support</b>	<b>10.62</b>
<b>Farming, Fishing, Forestry</b>	<b>\$9.78</b>
<b>Construction/Extraction</b>	<b>\$14.48</b>
<b>Installation, Maintenance, Repair</b>	<b>\$12.48</b>
<b>Production Occupations</b>	<b>\$11.23</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>\$11.23</b>

Source: US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics

# Business Composition & Employment

**B**usiness composition and employment comprises the types of firms within a given area, as well as expanding firms, unemployment rates, and potential job growth.



Not long ago, Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties were thriving thanks to the coal mining industry. The luxurious black coal found within county lines created a booming job market since homes and factories depended on it for fuel. After new fuel methods were found, northeastern Pennsylvania workers were forced to reinvent themselves and find alternate ways to earn a steady income.

Luzerne County utilizes two major development agencies to spearhead business growth. The Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry is located conveniently on Public Square and was established in 1953 from the Greater Wilkes-Barre Industrial Fund. The chamber has played a crucial role in several business openings within the last ten years. It owns four area industrial parks: Crestwood, Corporate Center at East Mountain, Hanover Crossings, and Hanover Industrial Estates. The Wilkes-Barre Chamber also has a business incubator—The Innovation

Center located on South Main Street in Wilkes-Barre. The incubator is home to over ten start-up businesses that utilize shared services, the cost of which are included in their rent. The Innovation Center offers three floors of new businesses, offices, and work space.

Hazleton City, second in size to Wilkes-Barre in Luzerne County, has its Community Area New Development Organization. This organization was developed to identify locations for future businesses to set up shop and aid them in the process. Coined “CanDo”, the organization was formed in 1956 and oversees three industrial parks: Humboldt, McAdoo, and Valmont.

CanDo also has a business incubator called CanBe, which is located in the Valmont Industrial Park. The incubator currently hosts several new businesses.

The Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce serves Lackawanna County’s busy and industrious community by forming lasting relationships with small and large companies. The chamber was established in 1867, when residents realized the value and importance of economic development. The chamber opened the Keystone Industrial Park, the Stauffer Industrial Park, the Scranton Lackawanna County Industrial Building Co., and the Lackawanna County Industrial Fuel Enterprises, which continue to offer vast employment opportunities. The Keystone Industrial Park has 30 businesses, 3,500 workers, and spans three million square feet. The Stauffer Industrial Park has a similar community impact, with seventeen companies, 2,000 workers, and 2.5 million square feet.

The Scranton Enterprise Center has tenants on its first and third floors, while its second floor is reserved for small businesses just venturing out on their own. The center offers these businesses adequate facility and

shared services. The center mentors tenants and provides training in finance and management.

Penn's Northeast is a regional marketing partnership of economic development professionals promoting business relocation, expansion and retention in northeastern Pennsylvania. It serves as a single point of contact for firms interested in opening a business in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne Counties. The public/private partnership is supported by economic development agencies, municipalities, and private businesses from the five counties.

Northeastern Pennsylvania's job market is composed primarily of solid jobs in production, manufacturing, education, construction, finance, retail, and government.

<b>Lackawanna County Workers and Occupations as of US Census 2000</b>		
<b>CLASS OF WORKER</b>		
Private wage and salary workers	78,864	81.9
Government workers	11,526	12.0
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	5,561	5.8
Unpaid family workers	339	0.4
<b>Employed civilian population 16 years and over</b>	<b>96,290</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>OCCUPATION</b>		
Management, professional, and related occupations	28,497	29.6
Service occupations	14,994	15.6
Sales and office occupations	28,025	29.1
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	176	0.2
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	7,890	8.2
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	16,708	17.4

<b>Luzerne County Workers and Occupations as of US Census 2000</b>		
<b>CLASS OF WORKER</b>		
Private wage and salary workers	117,667	82.0
Government workers	17,307	12.1
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	8,131	5.7
Unpaid family workers	387	0.2
<b>Employed civilian population 16 years and over</b>	<b>143,492</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>OCCUPATION</b>		
Management, professional, and related occupations	39,817	27.7
Service occupations	21,777	15.2
Sales and office occupations	40,282	28.1
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	283	0.2
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	14,052	9.8
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	27,281	19.0

## Types of Firms

Firms looking for comfortable dwellings are often drawn to the valleys of northeastern Pennsylvania. With grand mountains and four seasons to fit anyone's liking, the valleys offer an educated workforce and able bodied people. Numerous businesses prosper from the region's high quality workers that derive from a number of local area colleges and universities.

Having many different types of training programs available to them locally, area workers enjoy a wide range of career prospects in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties. Top of the line companies, manufacturers, distributors, and foreign-owned companies have set up shop locally to

**Lackawanna County's industries and number of establishments as identified in US Census 2000**

INDUSTRY		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	466	0.5
Construction	4,976	5.2
Manufacturing	15,159	15.7
Wholesale trade	3,480	3.6
Retail trade	12,886	13.4
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5,308	5.5
Information	2,671	2.8
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	6,340	6.6
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	5,820	6.0
Educational, health and social services	23,289	24.2
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	6,442	6.7
Other services (except public administration)	5,160	5.4
Public administration	4,293	4.5

result in a thriving job market, inspiring competition and economic growth.

The region is home to various top office centers. Businesses have a central office nucleus where most of the work is tackled in cubicles, board rooms, and meeting areas. Most companies work on computers, over phones, and through interpersonal relationships to build an information highway. The region's largest is the U.S. Social Security Data Center in Luzerne County, which employs over 1,100 people. Frontier Communications (formerly Commonwealth Telephone Company), Bank of America, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Northeastern PA also operate out of Luzerne County and all employ 1,000 workers. Sallie Mae, the nation's leading provider of student loans, is also located in the region. The firm's student loan processing center employs approximately 900 people.

Other large Luzerne County employers include: Wyoming Valley Health Care System, which employs 3,500; Keystone Automotive Operations, Inc., which employs 1,425; and Pride Mobility Products, which employs 1,200 people.

Bank of America is Lackawanna County's largest top office center, with 1,000 on staff to provide quality financial services. CIGNA Healthcare, Prudential Financial, Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., and Thompson Education Direct all employ over 800 people in the area.

**Luzerne County's industries and number of establishments as identified in US Census 2000**

INDUSTRY		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1,057	0.7
Construction	8,515	5.9
Manufacturing	23,754	16.6
Wholesale trade	6,075	4.2
Retail trade	18,595	13.0
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	8,260	5.8
Information	4,916	3.4
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	8,322	5.8
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	8,963	6.2
Educational, health and social services	30,882	21.5
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	9,988	7.0
Other services (except public administration)	6,369	4.4
Public administration	7,796	5.4

Other large Lackawanna County firms include: Mercy Hospital, which employs 2,352; Allied Services, which employs 2,300; Cinram Manufacturing, which employs 1,794; and Lackawanna County itself, which employs 1,518 people.

While these sizable organizations are vital to each county's success, as smaller centers offer a unique level of intimacy. Lackawanna County's Paper Magic Group, Internal Audit Bureau, Kemper Enterprise Group, Unitrin, Donnelly Directory, and Quad Three Group all fit this bill. Each employs roughly 100 people. Luzerne County's Creditrek, Hilton Reservations Worldwide, and Network Solutions are also small top office centers.<sup>24</sup>

Of course, many area manufacturing centers work tirelessly to prepare goods for the entire region and the nation. Many in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties may not recognize the area as one of the fastest growing manufacturing centers, which employs upward of 35,000 people. The region's close proximity to interstates, railways, and an airport encourage companies to locate here.

Offset Paperback Manufacturers, which employs 790 people, and Cargill Meat Solutions, which employs 900 people, are both located in Luzerne County. Gertrude Hawk Chocolates, which employs 1,025 people, is located in Lackawanna County. Further, Monroe County's Tobyhanna Army Depot is a popular workplace for Luzerne and Lackawanna County residents. The Army Depot employs over 4,300 people and is located just 30 minutes from the region.<sup>25</sup>

Working alongside manufacturers are distributors responsible for ensuring that goods are sent to desired locations. This task is made more feasible considering the region's transportation infrastructure and proximity to major roadways. Consequently, northeastern Pennsylvania's 12,208 distribution employees recognize their area as a critical corridor.

Kane Is Able, Inc., located in Lackawanna County, is a third-party provider of nationwide logistics, warehousing and freight transportation services. The company has a staff of 500 and its fleet of about 200 trucks.

Other distributors like Valley Distributing and T.J. Maxx, capitalize on Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties' favorable resources, people, and locations. These firms employ 400, 750, and 680, respectively.<sup>26</sup>

Foreign owned companies also find the region appealing. Companies from the Netherlands, Japan, Spain, France, Switzerland, Germany, Israel, and Sweden all have local facilities. Each opens up jobs and competition, and stimulates the region's growing economy.

Pennsylvania is the nation's fifth largest plastics manufacturer. Likewise, the state ranks sixth in terms of plastics manufacturing employment. With an average annual salary of approximately \$27,707, Pennsylvania's plastics industry is comparable to New Jersey and New York's – where workers earn approximately \$30,000 to \$35,000. Fabri-Kal Corporation, Compression Polymers, and Bemis Co., Inc. all produce plastics in Luzerne or Lackawanna Counties.<sup>27</sup>

The region is also home to various successful high tech firms, such as Solid Cactus, Inc. and Pepperjam – both in Luzerne County. Solid Cactus produces websites for Yahoo stores and is an e-commerce solutions provider. For the second straight year, Solid Cactus ranked #11 on the list of "Best Places to Work in Pennsylvania, 2007" by the Team Pennsylvania Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development, the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry and the Central Penn Business Journal.<sup>28</sup>

Pepperjam, headquartered in Wilkes-Barre, is the nation's leading full-service internet marketing agency. Recognized by Inc. Magazine in 2007 as one of the fastest growing privately-held companies in the country,

Pepperjam offers full-service management and consulting in the areas of search-engine marketing, affiliate marketing, and online media buying and planning. Both firms started with only a handful of employees and have grown to organizations employing upward of 100 people.

Another prevalent regional industry is food processing. This industry cluster looks to ensure safe processing, quality products, profitable production, labeling, and effective public communications. Some companies within this industry take raw agricultural materials and refine them for consumption.<sup>29</sup>



The Greater Hazleton Area, in Luzerne County, is home to several food processing firms, including:

- Archer Daniels Midland
- Cargill Meat Solutions
- General Mills
- Gonnella Frozen Products, Inc.
- Hershey Foods
- Stroehmann Bakeries
- The Coca-Cola Company

The Greater Wilkes-Barre Area, in Luzerne County, is home to other food processing businesses, including:

- George Weston Bakeries
- Quaker Oats/Gatorade
- Mission Foods
- Citterio

The Greater Scranton Area, in Lackawanna County, is home to the following food processing firms:

- Advance Foods
- Preferred Meal Systems
- Maid Rite Steaks
- Gertrude Hawk
- Mia Products

The region's top food processing industries include commercial bakeries, soft drink manufacturers, snack food manufacturers, confectionary manufacturing from purchased chocolate, and confectionary manufacturing from cocoa beans.

Another prominent area industry, which includes high employment numbers, is construction/building products. Organizations including



Sordoni Construction Services in Kingston, Luzerne County, and Ruckno Construction in the Borough of Luzerne have been doing business in the Wyoming Valley for over 100 years. Sordoni Construction special-

izes in commercial construction projects, while Ruckno designs homes and housing developments.

For those seeking employment, Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties may be ideal places to start. Luzerne County's fifteen largest employers are varied by industry. These employers provide a range of specialty services, including financial services, manufacturing, health insurance, retail clothing, student loan processing, and records and cassettes.

## Expanding Firms

In April 2007, Governor Ed Rendell revealed that a secondary data operations center headquartered in New York City recognized the Lackawanna/Luzerne County region's skilled workforce and friendly business environment and decided to set up shop in Scranton. Rendell noted that the firm could have been housed in any other city or state, but chose Scranton, in

<b>Largest Regional Employers by Category</b>			
<b>Hospitals/Health Care</b>			
<b>Business Name</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Type of Business</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
Wyoming Valley Health Care System	Luzerne	Hospitals	3,500
Mercy Hospital	Lackawanna	Health Care	2,352
Allied Services	Lackawanna	Rehabilitative Health Care	2,300
<b>Office Companies</b>			
<b>Business Name</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Type of Business</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
Frontier Communication Solutions	Luzerne	Telecommunications	1,100
U.S. Social Security Data Center	Luzerne	Data Center	1,100
Bank of America	Lackawanna	Financial Services	1,000
Blue Cross/Blue Shield NEPA	Luzerne	Health Insurance	1,000
CIGNA Healthcare	Lackawanna	Health Insurance	900
PNC Bank	Regional	Financial Services	875
Prudential Financial	Lackawanna	Pension/Profit Sharing Plans	865
Metropolitan Life Insurance	Lackawanna	Computer Center	816
Penn Foster Career School	Lackawanna	Distance Education	800
Sallie Mae	Luzerne	Student Loan Processing	700
<b>Manufacturing Companies</b>			
<b>Business Name</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Type of Business</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
Cinram International	Lackawanna	Records, Cassettes	2,600
Pride Mobility Products, Inc.	Luzerne	Lift & Power Wheelchairs	1,145
Offset Paperback	Luzerne	Book Printing	850
Cargill Meat Solutions	Luzerne	Meat Processing	850
Gertrude Hawk Chocolates	Lackawanna	Chocolate & Cocoa Products	650
Lockheed Martin Tactical Defense	Lackawanna	Nuclear Components	620
Bemis Company	Luzerne	Plastics, Materials	600
Gentex	Lackawanna	Fabrics & life safety products	550
Fairchild Semiconductor	Luzerne	Discrete Power/Semiconductors	500
Intermetro Industires Corp.	Luzerne	Wire shelving material & handling storage	500
<b>Distribution Companies</b>			
<b>Business Name</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Type of Business</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
Keystone Automotive	Luzerne	Auto Parts	1,425
Sears Logistics	Luzerne	Retail Products	900
T.J. Maxx	Luzerne	Garments	840
Kane Warehousing	Lackawanna	3PL-various distribution	400
Supermarket Services	Lackawanna	Supermarket Products	466
Valley Distributing	Lackawanna	3PL-various distribution	400
Lord & Taylor	Luzerne	Retail Clothing	351
McLane Co.	Lackawanna	Food	350
Bradley Caldwell	Luzerne	Hardware/Farm Supplies	340

Source: Penn's Northeast, Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry, Scranton Chamber of Commerce

Lackawanna County.

After evaluating the area, SECCAS, LLC, a top provider of compliance solutions for financial firms, decided to locate in Scranton. The Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, the Scranton Office of Economic and Community Development and Penn's Northeast have all been aiding in SECCA's plans by helping it obtain loans and training funds, while validating their investment in the continued promise of Lackawanna County.<sup>30</sup>



Further, in early 2008, Governor Rendell announced that northeastern Pennsylvania would be the recipient of the Wall Street West Initiative (WIRED) - a \$15 million grant aimed at strengthening financial service infrastructures. The WIRED initiative will link firms from northeastern Pennsylvania to Manhattan.

Not only is the area progressing in the finance industry, but manufacturers (as noted earlier) are moving in as well. NBTY is a huge producer

of affordable nutritional supplements, and nets billions in annual sales. In 2005 NBTY announced it would locate in Hazleton, in Luzerne County. With a building underway by Mericle Construction in the Humboldt Industrial Park, the corporation could not turn down the region's low operating costs and numerous other amenities.

Other notable companies lured to northeastern Pennsylvania include:

- Mission Foods, based out of Irving, Texas, and located in the Crestwood Industrial Park, makes tortillas and is providing hundreds of jobs to northeasterners. The company announced its move in 2005, after Governor Rendell's office offered a \$6.7 million financial package and a 110,000 square feet of work space.
- Igourmet.com had been in business for several years before making its transition from New York City to West Pittston. Ranked #1 on Forbes.com for the best gourmet food website, the company distributes top of the line food in the fastest growing medium available today – the Internet.
- Cardinal Glass Industries of Minnesota opened in the Crestwood Industrial Park, providing jobs to over 100 people in a 171,000 square foot building. The facility manager has said that the support of northeastern Pennsylvania encouraged the new site location.
- Raflatac Inc., of Finland, which has operated out of Hanover Industrial Park since 2005, makes self-adhesive labels. The firm is viewed as one of the industry's top manufacturers.
- BabyAge.com left Moonachie, New Jersey, for Hanover Township, in Luzerne County, in 2005 when it became attracted to Luzerne County's economic renewal initiatives. The company markets baby apparel and necessities over the Internet.
- Pepperjam, one of the fastest growing technology companies in the U.S., is arguably the fastest growing firm in northeastern Pennsylvania. Pepperjam launched its business in Wilkes-Barre with four employees, and now employs nearly 100 people. The company has taken advantage of an incubator in the Wilkes-Barre Innovation Center and is thriving in the Internet marketing and online media management world.

Clearly, online and internet marketing jobs are a significant part of the future. Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties are taking the lead in bringing these new age companies to the area. Not only are they offering funding, but they are lending support and commitment to smaller companies looking to prosper. Northeastern Pennsylvania's leaders have their collective eye on the future, while companies have their collective eye on northeastern Pennsylvania.

**Northeastern Pennsylvania's Growing Firms**

Industry	Annual Employment 2006	Annual Employment 2005
Good producing	45,400	45,400
Service roducing	215,700	214,400
Construction/Mining	10,900	120,600
Manufacturing	34,500	34,800
Wholesale Trade	11,800	11,500
Transportation	33,000	33,700
Information	14,000	13,500
Financial	12,900	13,400
Business Services	24,200	23,400
Eduction/Health Services	50,000	49,100
Leisure/Hospitality	22,000	22,000
Government	31,800	31,700

Source: Pa Dept. of Labor

Level 3 Communications, a top notch global telecommunications business, plans to construct a high-speed fiber optic network expected to attach northeastern Pennsylvania to the Big Apple. Northeastern Pennsylvania will serve as a backup base for New York City's financial services industry; this initiative is expected to bring to the area hundreds of new jobs and create a stronger workforce.<sup>31</sup>

By mid 2008, approximately 500 new jobs are expected to come to Lackawanna County, when distributor and logistics experts from the McLane Company set up shop in the Valley View Business

Park, Jessup. The company will help advance the business park as it continues construction.

**Unemployment Rates**

Unemployment plagues 4.4% of Americans and 4.1% Pennsylvanians. Similarly, unemployment rates in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties as of October 2007 reached 4.3% and 4.6%, respectively. Approximately 6.8 million total Americans were unemployed in October 2007, including with 261,000 in Pennsylvania, 4,600 in Lackawanna County and 7,300 in Luzerne County.

A pattern of lower unemployment rates was recorded between December 2000 and October 2007. At 4.3% in October 2007, Lackawanna County's unemployment rate was its lowest such rate over the seven-year period. Similarly, Luzerne County's unemployment rate of 4.6% in October 2007 was also its lowest rate during the same time span.

Also, as of October 2007, the number of employed Americans totaled 146.7 million, including more than 6 million Pennsylvanians, 105,700 Lackawanna County residents and 157,500 Luzerne County residents.

**Unemployment Rates  
Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties  
October 2007-2000**

	Oct-07	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Lackawanna County	4.3	5	5.3	6	5.9	6.1	5.5
Luzerne County	4.6	5.5	5.8	6.7	6.5	6.5	5.6

Source: PA Dept. of Labor & Industry

Average weekly wages for Pennsylvania workers as of January 2006 were \$807, compared with \$613 for Lackawanna County workers \$613, and \$639 for Luzerne County workers.

## **Job Growth Potential**

With many new businesses, firms, and industries moving into Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties, it would be hard to predict poor job growth. In fact, new jobs should be opening up in construction, transportation, public utilities, trade (wholesale and retail), finance, real estate, insurance, health services, and computer related industries. Job projections through 2014 show potential for new jobs, but also competition with limited amounts of jobs in specific industries expected to become available by 2014.

Growth can be seen in a number of interesting areas as several occupations should soon flourish with job openings through 2014. According to the Pennsylvania Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, the area's job outlook is bright — especially for those in healthcare, computer software and network systems, actuaries, materials engineers and personal care. Healthcare workers should experience the largest growth spurt, with personal care workers comprising child care workers and home health aides. Fitness trainers are expected to be the second most sought after group, and the third most sought after group is expected to be social service workers, including counselors, substance abuse counselors, therapists and health educators.

With the healthcare field growing so rapidly, it is only fitting that health technicians, such as pharmacy techs, dental hygienists, nurses, and paramedics, may see an increase in new jobs. Such positions are expected to become available in hospitals, private practice offices, clinics, and the proposed Commonwealth Medical College.

The food preparation and beverage service industry is another area expected to create hundreds of more area jobs. Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties enjoy a rich tradition of fine dining and friendly bistro establishments and the industry is expected to create additional employment

opportunities. Service workers, such as coffee shop servers and bartenders, are also expected to be in greater demand.<sup>34</sup>

# Education & Workforce Development

As the driving force behind most development, education is a substantial factor in the area's economic health. Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties take pride helping their residents better their careers through achieving higher education goals. The region's vast array of colleges, universities and trade schools support this effort. In addition, area public schools are equipped with programs to meet special needs - such as accelerated learning and special education programs. The region continually strives to enhance productivity and there may be no better way to do so than fostering education – from Pre-K through post-graduate studies.

Of residents 25 years of age and older in Luzerne County, 85.6% are high school graduates. This is higher than the national average of 84.2%.<sup>35</sup> In Lackawanna County, 85.9% of residents are high school graduates.<sup>36</sup>

According to Pennsylvania's Department of Education, 128,603 students graduated from public high schools in 2007; 93,879 or 74% of these students were college bound.<sup>37</sup> This represents a 1.5% increase over 2001, when 131,814 Pennsylvanians graduated high school, and 95,562 or 72.5% were college bound.

Yet, in a world filled with academics and numerous school systems, it is surprising that just 27% of Americans go on to earn a Bachelor's degree. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey for 2006, 19.5% of Luzerne County residents and 22.4% of Lackawanna County residents went on to earn Bachelor's degrees.<sup>38</sup>

School attendance is the key to disciplining students and promoting a strong work ethic as they mature into young adults. A 2002 Pennsylvania School Report Card indicated that Pennsylvania had a 93% attendance rating in public schools, which is about even with reports issued as far back as 1996.



As of 2005, Lackawanna County reported an overall attendance rate of 93.7%. And as of 2006, it reported a 93.9% kindergarten attendance rate, a 94.9% elementary school attendance rate, and a 92.7% high school attendance rate.

Not far behind, Luzerne County reported an overall attendance rate of 92.5%. As of 2006, the county reported a 93.3% kindergarten attendance rate, a 94.6%

elementary school attendance rate, and a 90.5% high school attendance rate.<sup>39</sup>

Schooling is perhaps the backbone of our society. How well a region is educated, the types of schools it has, and the opportunities for every child to get an education are vital to the region's overall success. Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties offer exemplary education opportunities from Pre-K through higher education.

## Institutions of Higher Education

Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties are home to numerous institutions of higher education. Some are universities offering graduate programs with terminal degrees, while others offer certificate programs and undergraduate degrees. All of these institutions offer lifelong learning programs for adults.

**Johnson College, Scranton, Lackawanna County:** A private, two-year college, Johnson College offers twelve degree programs of study, focuses on providing students with the technical skills and general education needed to succeed in a demanding, industry-driven world.

[www.johnson.edu](http://www.johnson.edu)

**Keystone College, La Plume, Lackawanna County:** Launched as a junior college in 1934, the institution became a four-year college in 1998 and now offers seventeen Bachelor's degree programs, fifteen Associate's degree programs, and several certification programs.

[www.keystone.edu](http://www.keystone.edu)

**King's College, Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County:** A Catholic liberal arts college located on a small urban campus, King's offers Associate's, Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs in more than 38 areas of study.

[www.kings.edu](http://www.kings.edu)

**Lackawanna College, Scranton, Lackawanna County:** Located in a downtown environment, Lackawanna offers 26 two-year, Associate's degree programs in business, computer information systems, industrial/manufacturing, criminal justice, allied health, sport management, early childhood education and communications.

[www.lackawanna.edu](http://www.lackawanna.edu)

**Luzerne County Community College (LCCC), Nanticoke, Luzerne County:** A two-year college located in Nanticoke, LCCC's 167-acre campus has the highest student enrollment of any county institution. LCCC offers diverse classes, flexible scheduling, and to the ability to defer costs when going on to earn a Bachelor's degree. LCCC also offers many workforce development programs, including Work Readiness Certificates, certification programs, the Adult Learners Training and Assistance Program (ALTA), and is a GED testing center.

[www.luzerne.edu](http://www.luzerne.edu)

**Marywood University, Scranton, Lackawanna County:** Originating as an all female college, Marywood University is now open to co-ed

students and offers undergraduate, graduate, Master's, and terminal degrees with programs in each of its four colleges.

[www.marywood.edu](http://www.marywood.edu)

**Misericordia University, Dallas, Luzerne County:** Founded by the Sisters of Mercy in the 1940's, the school is a four-year liberal arts college offering students more than 20 degree programs, as well as certification, baccalaureate, Master's, and terminal degrees.

[www.misericordia.edu](http://www.misericordia.edu)

**Penn State Hazleton, Luzerne County:** This satellite campus of the Pennsylvania State University offers students the resources of a Big 10 university, in an intimate campus environment. Penn State Hazleton offers eight Associate's degree programs, three Bachelor's degree programs, a Master of Education degree, and the beginning of more than 160 Penn State degrees, credited and non-credited certifications.

[www.hn.psu.edu](http://www.hn.psu.edu)

**Penn State Lehman, Luzerne County:** At this satellite campus of the Pennsylvania State University, students may choose to pursue a degree in any of more than 160 majors. Some students will move to another Penn State campus to complete their degree, while others choose to complete one of eight Bachelor's or six Associate's degree programs.

[www.wb.psu.edu](http://www.wb.psu.edu)

**Penn State Worthington Scranton, Lackawanna County:** This satellite campus of the Pennsylvania State University offers both Bachelor's and Associate's degree programs, certifications, and the first two years of a Bachelor's degree in more than 160 programs.

[www.sn.psu.edu](http://www.sn.psu.edu)

**University of Scranton, Scranton, Lackawanna County:** The Jesuit Institution located in downtown Scranton is one Pennsylvania's top universities. The university offers Bachelor's, Master's, and terminal degrees in more than 100 degree programs.

[www.scranton.edu](http://www.scranton.edu)

**Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County:** Launched as Bucknell University's junior college in 1933, Wilkes University is now a

private, independent institution offering Bachelor's, Master's, and terminal degrees, as well as leadership development certifications in more than 50 programs. Wilkes is planning to open its law school by 2009. [www.wilkes.edu](http://www.wilkes.edu)



## Training Programs

**Allied Medical & Technical, Scranton, Lackawanna County:** Allied offers Associate's degrees in specialized technologies, such as medical assistant technician and digital graphic design associate. [www.alliedtech.com](http://www.alliedtech.com)

**Allied Medical & Technical, Forty Fort, Luzerne County:** Allied offers Associate's degrees in specialized technologies, business administration/accounting, HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning), and refrigeration. [www.alliedtech.com](http://www.alliedtech.com)

**Career Development & Employment Career Development, Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton Luzerne County, Scranton, Lackawanna County:** Career Development offers training programs in medical computers and truck driving, and provides administrative and corporate specialized training. [www.cdetraining.com](http://www.cdetraining.com)

**New Horizons, Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County:** Offers information technology training on a number of software programs, including, for example, Excel, PowerPoint and Adobe PageMaker, among others. [www.nhwilkesbarre.com](http://www.nhwilkesbarre.com)

**NSB Trainers, West Hazleton, Luzerne County:** NSB is a private, licensed school offering various trade programs.

**Penn Foster Career School, Scranton, Lackawanna County:** Penn Foster is a distance learning institution that offers programs and services designed to meet lifelong learning needs of adult learners. Penn Foster offers over 80 certification programs. [www.pennfoster.edu](http://www.pennfoster.edu)

**Trans America Technical Institute, Jermyn, Lackawanna County:** Trans America offers customized and corporate training in a number of areas. [www.transamericantech.com](http://www.transamericantech.com)

## School Districts

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties offer families various K-12 educational options and opportunities. Combined, the region supports 21 public school districts and numerous private institutions, including religious institutions.

In the 2006-2007 school year, each public school district in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties except one met adequate yearly progress on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment tests (PSSA's) and Stan-

dard Achievement Tests (SAT's). The PSSA test monitors math and reading skills in third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and eleventh grades, and analyzes writing skills in grades eight and eleven.<sup>40</sup>

As of 2007, SAT scores for public school districts in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties ranked above average, with all public schools combined scores [verbal, math, writing] averaging over 1000.

In Lackawanna County, Abington Heights recorded the highest, combined (math, verbal writing) SAT average score of 1525, followed by 1466 at North Pocono at 1466, 1420 at Scranton High, 1418 at West Scranton High, 1404 at Valley View, 1396 at Carbondale Area, 1388 at Dunmore and Riverside, 1378 at Lakeland, 1348 at Mid Valley and 1327 at Old Forge.

In Luzerne County, Dallas School District reported the highest combined SAT average score of 1515, followed by 1506 at Crestwood, 1466 at Wyoming Valley West, 1446 at E.L. Meyers, 1434 at Pittston Area, 1428 at Lake Lehman, 1420 at Northwest Area, 1415 at Coughlin and Wilkes-Barre Area, 1414 at Wyoming Area, 1390 at Hanover Area, 1376 at Greater Nanticoke Area, 1336 at Hazleton Area, and 1304 at GAR and Wilkes-Barre Area.<sup>41</sup>

Aside from the area's many public schools, many area students attend parochial or other private institutions.

Until 2007, Luzerne County was home to four catholic high schools, including Bishop Hoban, Bishop O'Reilly, Bishop Hafey and Seton Catholic. The Diocese of Scranton consolidated these schools in advance of the 2007-2008 school year to a single building (the former Bishop Hoban building), under the name Holy Redeemer. At the same time, numerous Catholic grade schools in Luzerne County also consolidated or closed. A new K-8 facility known as Good Shepherd Academy, located in the former Bishop O'Reilly building, was a result of the consolidations/closings. In addition, Holy Family Academy is a K-8 grade school

located in the former Bishop Hafey High School.

Lackawanna County's Catholic School System, also under the auspices of the Diocese of Scranton, has gone through similar changes. Bishop Hannan and Bishop O'Hara High Schools merged into Holy Cross High School, while certain grade schools (Holy Rosary in Scranton and St. Mary's School in Old Forge) closed and combined with All Saints Academy, in Scranton.

Wyoming Seminary, located in Forty Fort and Kingston, in Luzerne County, offers a school for Pre-K through eighth grade students, with an enrollment of 352 students, as well as a high school, with an enrollment of 461 students. The facility boasts a 1:14 teacher-to-student ratio in its high school, and a 1:13 teacher-to-student ratio in its elementary/intermediate school.<sup>42</sup>

Wilkes-Barre Academy, another private institution, of-

<b>School District Enrollments</b>	
<b>LACKAWANNA COUNTY</b>	
Abington Heights	3,646
Carbondale Area	1,593
CTC of Lackawanna County	776
Dunmore	1,665
Lakeland	1,716
Mid Valley	1,570
North Pocono	3,308
Old Forge	984
Riverside	1,524
Scranton	8,714
Valley View	2,602
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,098</b>
<b>LUZERNE COUNTY</b>	
Crestwood	2,934
Dallas	2,432
Greater Nanticoke Area	2,196
Hanover Area	2,046
Hazleton Area Career Center	773
Hazleton Area	8,560
Lake Lehmon	2,235
Northwest Area	1,456
Pittston Area	3,140
West Side Vo Tech	530
Wilkes-Barre Area Vo Tech	778
Wilkes-Barre Area	7,046
Wyoming Valley Area	2,672
Wyoming Valley West	5,111
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,909</b>
<i>Source: PA Department of Education</i>	

fers a Pre-K through eighth grade program. Located in Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, the school boasts a 1:25 teacher-to-student ratio. With just 223 total students, one of the school's main attractions is its ability to provide highly individualized attention.<sup>43</sup>

Freeland, Pennsylvania, is tucked away in Luzerne County's southernmost corner and includes a fine school for students in sixth through twelfth grades. Freeland's MMI is a college preparatory school, which challenges students to develop a strong work ethic in a diverse environment. MMI's currently has 254 enrolled students.<sup>44</sup>

## Pre-K Programs

Governor Ed Rendell signed Pennsylvania's 2007-2008 state budget into law in July 2007. The budget included \$75 million for the launch of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts. An increase in funding of \$20 million for full-day kindergarten was also made available through the Governor's Accountability Block Grant Program, which should create educational opportunities for an additional 7,600 Pennsylvania. The budget also continued Pennsylvania's landmark funding for Head Start. Overall, the budget invested more than \$95 million in quality childhood programs.<sup>45</sup>

## The Workforce

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties are home to various key industries offering area residents a multitude of career opportunities. According to The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (PA WorkStats), both counties have a variety of high priority occupations. Detail surrounding such high priority occupations, including educational attainment requirements, wages, projected employment for 2014, and number of annual openings, is provided in the following tables.

2007 Average SAT Scores		
	Math/Verbal	Math/Verbal/Writing
<b>LACKAWANNA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS</b>		
Abington Heights	1023	1525
Carbondale Area	933	1396
Dunmore	927	1388
Lakeland	919	1378
Mid Valley	913	1348
North Pocono	987	1466
Old Forge	883	1327
Riverside	936	1388
Scranton	955	1420
West Scranton	945	1418
Valley View	941	1404
<b>LUZERNE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS</b>		
Crestwood	1012	1506
Dallas	1017	1515
Greater Nanticoke Area	927	1376
Hanover Area	926	1390
Hazleton Area	906	1336
Lake Lehmon	964	1428
Northwest Area	952	1420
Pittston Area	962	1434
Wilkes-Barre Area		
E.L. Meyers	967	1446
GAR	881	1304
Coughlin	950	1415
Wyoming Valley Area	948	1414
Wyoming Valley West	978	1466
<i>Source: PA Department of Education</i>		

## 2007 High Priority Occupations for Luzerne-Schuylkill Counties Workforce Investment Area

SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2005)			Employment			
			Annual Average	Entry Level	Exper. Level	Estimated 2004	Projected 2014	Percent Change	Annual Openings
11-1011	Chief Executives	BD+	112,840	53,200	142,650	810	840	3.7	18
11-1021	General & Operations Managers	BD+	81,710	41,220	101,950	2,900	3,030	4.5	68
11-2022	Sales Managers	BD+	76,030	34,110	97,000	530	560	5.7	13
11-3011	Administrative Services Managers	BD+	52,210	27,150	64,740	450	490	8.9	13
11-3021	IT Managers - Programming, Network & DB	BD+	81,390	55,840	94,170	280	310	10.7	8
11-3031	Financial Managers	BD+	72,070	40,780	87,720	900	930	3.3	16
11-3051	Industrial Production Managers	BD	78,160	40,630	96,930	330	300	-9.1	3
11-9021	Construction Managers	BD	75,700	47,700	89,700	330	320	-3.0	5
11-9032	Education Administrators, Elementary & Secondary School	BD+	65,050	39,010	78,060	400	420	5.0	12
11-9033	Education Administrators, Postsecondary	BD+	68,120	43,250	80,550	140	160	14.3	6
11-9111	Medical & Health Services Managers	BD+	67,500	42,510	79,990	320	340	6.3	8
11-9141	Property, Real Estate & Community Association Managers	BD	54,250	31,300	65,720	150	150	0.0	3
13-1031	Claims Adjusters, Examiners & Investigators	LT OJT	43,760	30,230	50,530	150	160	6.7	3
13-1051	Cost Estimators	BD	42,520	25,360	51,100	240	240	0.0	5
13-1071	Employment, Recruitment & Placement Specialists	BD	51,040	29,720	61,700	130	140	7.7	3
13-1073	Training & Development Specialists	BD	42,030	30,290	47,890	250	240	-4.0	3
13-1111	Management Analysts	BD+	55,360	42,790	61,650	260	280	7.7	6
13-2011	Accountants & Auditors	BD	49,130	28,420	59,480	1,110	1,160	4.5	26
13-2051	Financial Analysts	BD	53,820	36,760	62,360	190	190	0.0	3
13-2052	Personal Financial Advisors	BD	119,510	56,530	151,000	230	240	4.3	4
13-2072	Loan Officers	BD	39,870	28,750	45,430	250	240	-4.0	3
15-1011	Computer & Information Scientists, Research	PhD	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0.0	0
15-1021	Computer Programmers	BD	52,890	34,660	62,000	360	350	-2.8	8
15-1031	Computer Software Engineers, Applications	BD	60,400	42,110	69,550	160	190	18.8	5
15-1032	Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	BD	82,110	60,320	93,000	120	180	50.0	7
15-1041	Computer Support Specialists	AD	34,560	25,060	39,320	450	490	8.9	10

## 2007 High Priority Occupations for Luzerne-Schuylkill Counties Workforce Investment Area

SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2005)			Employment			
			Annual Average	Entry Level	Exper. Level	Estimated 2004	Projected 2014	Percent Change	Annual Openings
15-1051	Computer Systems Analysts	BD	61,310	47,640	68,140	270	290	7.4	5
15-1071	Network & Computer Systems Administrators	BD	47,730	33,030	55,080	290	320	10.3	6
15-1081	Network Systems & Data Communications Analysts	BD	62,560	45,190	71,250	80	110	37.5	4
15-2041	Statisticians	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	10	0.0	0
17-2031	Biomedical Engineers	BD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
17-2081	Environmental Engineers	BD	57,500	38,500	66,990	20	20	0.0	0
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	BD	58,440	42,730	66,290	150	150	0.0	4
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	BD	63,910	43,420	74,160	180	170	-5.6	4
17-2161	Nuclear Engineers	BD	N/A	N/A	N/A	110	90	-18.2	1
17-3013	Mechanical Drafters	PS VOC	36,790	24,840	42,770	90	80	-11.1	1
17-3023	Electrical & Electronic Engineering Technicians	AD	46,960	35,180	52,850	170	170	0.0	4
17-3026	Industrial Engineering Technicians	AD	42,170	28,190	49,160	90	80	-11.1	1
19-1021	Biochemists & Biophysicists	PhD	76,350	60,100	84,480	0	0	0.0	0
19-1042	Medical Scientists	PhD	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0.0	0
19-2031	Chemists	BD	61,230	43,510	70,090	30	30	0.0	1
19-2041	Environmental Scientists & Specialists	BD	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	10	0.0	0
19-4021	Biological Technicians	AD	N/A	N/A	N/A	30	30	0.0	1
21-1011	Substance Abuse & Behavioral Disorder Counselors	MD	31,830	17,850	38,820	210	270	28.6	11
21-1012	Educational, Vocational & School Counselors	MD	38,440	22,080	46,620	320	340	6.3	9
21-1014	Mental Health Counselors	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	700	860	22.9	32
21-1022	Medical & Public Health Social Workers	BD	39,930	26,790	46,500	140	150	7.1	4
21-1023	Mental Health & Substance Abuse Social Workers	MD	25,560	17,770	29,460	410	440	7.3	10

## 2007 High Priority Occupations for Luzerne-Schuylkill Counties Workforce Investment Area

SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2005)			Employment			
			Annual Average	Entry Level	Exper. Level	Estimated 2004	Projected 2014	Percent Change	Annual Openings
21-1093	Social & Human Service Assistants	MT OJT	26,640	17,300	31,320	400	490	22.5	16
23-2011	Paralegals & Legal Assistants	AD	34,480	24,540	39,460	180	210	16.7	4
25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary	PhD	46,650	34,780	52,590	110	120	9.1	4
25-1022	Mathematical Science Teachers, Postsecondary	PhD	53,770	32,980	64,170	70	80	14.3	3
25-1032	Engineering Teachers, Postsecondary	PhD	67,750	39,240	82,010	110	120	9.1	4
25-1042	Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary	PhD	53,030	37,110	60,990	80	80	0.0	2
25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	PhD	53,580	36,440	62,150	100	110	10.0	3
25-1072	Nursing Instructors & Teachers, Postsecondary	MD*	N/A	N/A	N/A	70	70	0.0	2
25-1081	Education Teachers, Postsecondary	PhD	52,640	33,280	62,330	100	110	10.0	3
25-1194	Vocational Education Teachers, Postsecondary	WK EXP	39,860	25,950	46,810	220	220	0.0	5
25-2012	Kindergarten Teachers	BD	46,370	30,260	54,430	120	120	0.0	2
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers	BD	42,810	27,060	50,690	1,550	1,500	-3.2	29
25-2022	Middle School Teachers - Math, Science and Foreign Language	BD	45,030	29,010	53,040	1,110	1,110	0.0	24
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers - Math, Science and Foreign Language	BD	46,250	29,630	54,560	1,900	1,890	-0.5	52
25-2032	Vocational Education Teachers, Secondary School	BD	51,920	37,630	59,070	140	150	7.1	5
25-2041	Special Education Teachers, Preschool, Kindergarten & Elementary	BD	51,450	36,350	59,000	380	350	-7.9	6
25-2042	Special Education Teachers, Middle School	BD	N/A	N/A	N/A	90	90	0.0	2
25-2043	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	BD	53,590	38,410	61,180	60	60	0.0	2
25-3011	Adult Literacy, Remedial Education & GED Teachers	BD	43,470	30,870	49,770	40	40	0.0	1
25-4021	Librarians	MD	43,080	26,510	51,360	200	220	10.0	7
25-4031	Library Technicians	ST OJT	22,480	15,690	25,880	70	70	0.0	2
25-9041	Teacher Assistants	AD*	18,610	14,260	20,780	1,260	1,340	6.3	32
27-1024	Graphic Designers	BD	29,630	20,010	34,440	250	270	8.0	5
27-3031	Public Relations Specialists	BD	39,700	25,190	46,960	100	110	10.0	3
29-1051	Pharmacists	PROF	74,100	51,900	85,200	460	490	6.5	12
29-1111	Registered Nurses	AD	49,230	38,990	54,360	4,390	4,470	1.8	100

## 2007 High Priority Occupations for Luzerne-Schuylkill Counties Workforce Investment Area

SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2005)			Employment			
			Annual Average	Entry Level	Exper. Level	Estimated 2004	Projected 2014	Percent Change	Annual Openings
29-1122	Occupational Therapists	BD	58,370	37,700	68,700	150	170	13.3	4
29-1123	Physical Therapists	MD	65,320	41,410	77,280	260	290	11.5	6
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	AD	36,300	26,070	41,410	140	120	-14.3	3
29-1131	Veterinarians	PROF	N/A	N/A	N/A	20	20	0.0	0
29-2011	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technologists	BD	N/A	N/A	N/A	180	180	0.0	5
29-2012	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians	AD	31,030	22,000	35,550	210	230	9.5	8
29-2021	Dental Hygienists	AD	57,100	42,260	64,530	270	320	18.5	7
29-2031	Cardiovascular Technologists & Technicians	AD	38,200	30,340	42,130	110	110	0.0	2
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists & Technicians	AD	40,970	31,880	45,510	320	320	0.0	6
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics	PS VOC	22,480	17,190	25,130	740	920	24.3	27
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	MT OJT	20,710	14,120	24,010	400	440	10.0	9
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists & Technicians	AD	N/A	N/A	N/A	20	30	50.0	1
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	PS VOC	33,520	27,390	36,580	1,610	1,770	9.9	51
29-2071	Medical Records & Health Information Technicians	AD	27,600	19,410	31,700	190	200	5.3	4
31-1011	Home Health Aides	ST OJT	18,510	14,760	20,380	550	710	29.1	23
31-1012	Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants	ST OJT	22,170	17,750	24,380	2,690	2,740	1.9	40
31-9091	Dental Assistants	MT OJT	26,010	22,170	27,930	300	360	20.0	14
31-9092	Medical Assistants	MT OJT	24,550	19,080	27,290	660	780	18.2	24
31-9094	Medical Transcriptionists	PS VOC	26,800	21,210	29,590	220	240	9.1	6
31-9096	Veterinary Assistants & Laboratory Animal Caretakers	ST OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	60	70	16.7	2
31-9099	Phlebotomists	N/A	24,360	14,750	29,170	760	840	10.5	22
33-3051	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	LT OJT	41,030	21,340	50,880	860	870	1.2	23
39-5012	Hairdressers & Hairstylists	PS VOC	17,120	12,800	19,280	1,100	1,170	6.4	28
39-9011	Child Care Workers	AD*	16,640	12,490	18,720	920	980	6.5	31
39-9021	Personal & Home Care Aides	ST OJT	19,760	16,310	21,480	990	1,190	20.2	36
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents	BD	40,570	25,280	48,210	900	900	0.0	22

## 2007 High Priority Occupations for Luzerne-Schuylkill Counties Workforce Investment Area

SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2005)			Employment			
			Annual Average	Entry Level	Exper. Level	Estimated 2004	Projected 2014	Percent Change	Annual Openings
41-3031	Securities Sales Representatives	BD	78,100	27,980	103,160	110	110	0.0	1
41-3041	Travel Agents	PS VOC	27,010	18,700	31,170	180	160	-11.1	2
41-4011	Sales Representatives, Scientific & Technical	MT OJT	65,490	31,450	82,510	170	170	0.0	4
41-4012	Sales Representatives	MT OJT	48,380	26,080	59,540	2,240	2,330	4.0	68
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents	PS VOC	27,810	19,790	31,820	220	230	4.5	5
41-9041	Telemarketers	ST OJT	23,890	14,480	28,600	660	570	-13.6	2
43-1011	Supervisors - Office & Administrative Support Workers	WK EXP	41,820	26,100	49,680	2,070	2,020	-2.4	39
43-3011	Bill & Account Collectors	ST OJT	28,740	19,670	33,280	420	470	11.9	13
43-3021	Billing & Posting Clerks & Machine Operators	ST OJT	24,430	19,350	26,970	840	780	-7.1	8
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting & Auditing Clerks	MT OJT	26,530	18,140	30,720	2,660	2,560	-3.8	40
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	MT OJT	23,780	17,550	26,890	3,080	3,360	9.1	74
43-4171	Receptionists & Information Clerks	ST OJT	20,980	15,920	23,510	1,530	1,640	7.2	49
43-5061	Production, Planning & Expediting Clerks	ST OJT	38,330	25,530	44,730	450	430	-4.4	9
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving & Traffic Clerks	ST OJT	26,980	18,130	31,400	1,420	1,310	-7.7	18
43-6011	Executive Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	MT OJT	29,820	22,310	33,570	1,750	1,840	5.1	43
43-6012	Legal Secretaries	PS VOC	28,260	25,400	29,680	300	320	6.7	8
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	PS VOC	21,210	13,720	24,950	400	420	5.0	10
43-6014	Secretaries	MT OJT	23,070	16,200	26,510	3,970	3,960	-0.3	75
43-9031	Desktop Publishers	PS VOC	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	50	0.0	1
43-9061	Office Clerks	ST OJT	21,700	13,950	25,580	4,510	4,520	0.2	101
45-2011	Agricultural Inspectors	WK EXP	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	10	0.0	0
47-1011	Supervisors - Construction Trades & Extraction Workers	WK EXP	56,100	35,600	66,350	810	800	-1.2	13
47-2021	Brickmasons & Blockmasons	LT OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	110	110	0.0	2
47-2022	Stonemasons	LT OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	40	40	0.0	1
47-2031	Carpenters	LT OJT	38,050	25,330	44,410	1,880	1,880	0.0	31
47-2051	Cement Masons & Concrete Finishers	LT OJT	34,670	22,820	40,600	60	60	0.0	1

## 2007 High Priority Occupations for Luzerne-Schuylkill Counties Workforce Investment Area

SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2005)			Employment			
			Annual Average	Entry Level	Exper. Level	Estimated 2004	Projected 2014	Percent Change	Annual Openings
47-2061	Construction Laborers	MT OJT	28,190	19,500	32,530	800	740	-7.5	5
47-2073	Operating Engineers	MT OJT	37,010	27,150	41,940	760	730	-3.9	17
47-2111	Electricians	LT OJT	42,350	30,900	48,080	830	820	-1.2	15
47-2141	Painters, Construction & Maintenance	MT OJT	34,790	21,740	41,320	330	330	0.0	5
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters	LT OJT	36,840	24,620	42,950	390	400	2.6	10
47-2181	Roofers	MT OJT	27,540	17,440	32,590	340	350	2.9	9
47-2211	Sheet Metal Workers	MT OJT	39,060	24,840	46,170	380	440	15.8	15
47-2221	Structural Iron & Steel Workers	LT OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	20	20	0.0	0
49-2021	Radio Mechanics	PS VOC	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	0	-100.0	0
49-2022	Telecommunications Equipment Installers & Repairers	PS VOC	41,240	25,370	49,170	390	370	-5.1	6
49-2091	Avionics Technicians	PS VOC	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0.0	0
49-2094	Elec. Installers & Repairers: Commercial & Industrial Equipment	PS VOC	44,160	36,900	47,800	140	120	-14.3	1
49-3021	Automotive Body & Related Repairers	LT OJT	26,970	21,940	29,480	370	340	-8.1	4
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	PS VOC	29,060	16,130	35,530	1,740	1,750	0.6	47
49-3031	Bus, Truck & Diesel Mechanics	PS VOC	32,990	22,970	38,000	520	530	1.9	14
49-9021	Heating, A/C & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	LT OJT	35,190	23,320	41,130	490	500	2.0	7
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	LT OJT	36,090	29,360	39,460	530	430	-18.9	1
49-9042	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	LT OJT	28,840	19,400	33,560	2,480	2,450	-1.2	45
49-9043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	LT OJT	30,020	23,490	33,280	240	200	-16.7	1
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers & Repairers	LT OJT	49,880	35,350	57,140	330	320	-3.0	8
49-9091	Slot Technicians	MT OJT	28,280	16,980	33,930	120	100	-16.7	1
51-1011	Supervisors - Production & Operating Workers	WK EXP	49,490	33,820	57,320	1,260	1,140	-9.5	14
51-2092	Team Assemblers	MT OJT	23,900	16,500	27,600	1,450	1,410	-2.8	34
51-3021	Butchers & Meat Cutters	LT OJT	24,420	12,350	30,450	300	270	-10.0	4
51-3092	Food Batchmakers	ST OJT	21,370	13,030	25,550	370	350	-5.4	7
51-4011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal & Plastic	LT OJT	26,030	15,490	31,300	170	150	-11.8	1

2007 High Priority Occupations for Luzerne-Schuylkill Counties Workforce Investment Area									
SOC Code	SOC Title	Educational Attainment	Wages (2005)			Employment			
			Annual Average	Entry Level	Exper. Level	Estimated 2004	Projected 2014	Percent Change	Annual Openings
51-4012	Numerical Tool & Process Control Programmers	LT OJT	38,330	29,420	42,780	40	40	0.0	1
51-4041	Machinists	LT OJT	34,140	27,320	37,550	720	700	-2.8	15
51-4072	Molding & Casting Machine Oprs, Metal & Plastic	MT OJT	28,610	21,450	32,180	270	230	-14.8	3
51-4111	Tool & Die Makers	LT OJT	34,280	28,230	37,300	70	60	-14.3	1
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers & Brazers	PS VOC	30,760	21,200	35,540	670	630	-6.0	15
51-5021	Job Printers	LT OJT	27,590	18,560	32,110	280	270	-3.6	6
51-5022	Prepress Technicians & Workers	LT OJT	34,130	27,790	37,300	250	230	-8.0	4
51-5023	Printing Machine Operators	MT OJT	33,490	23,730	38,370	700	660	-5.7	12
51-7011	Cabinetmakers & Bench Carpenters	LT OJT	30,600	24,360	33,720	100	110	10.0	4
51-7021	Furniture Finishers	LT OJT	24,120	15,890	28,240	60	50	-16.7	0
51-7042	Woodworking Machine Oprs/Tenders	MT OJT	23,690	18,810	26,130	100	90	-10.0	2
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers & Weighers	MT OJT	28,520	20,090	32,740	1,130	950	-15.9	8
51-9081	Dental Laboratory Technicians	LT OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	100	0.0	2
51-9082	Medical Appliance Technicians	LT OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
51-9111	Packaging & Filling Machine Operators/Tenders	ST OJT	27,130	18,450	31,460	860	730	-15.1	4
51-9196	Paper Goods Machine Setters/Operators/Tenders	MT OJT	N/A	N/A	N/A	240	190	-20.8	0
53-1031	Supervisors - Transportation & Vehicle Operators	WK EXP	53,970	32,810	64,540	320	330	3.1	9
53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	ST OJT	31,850	17,490	39,040	610	590	-3.3	8
53-3032	Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	MT OJT	35,560	23,430	41,630	4,240	4,360	2.8	81
53-3033	Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services	ST OJT	23,870	16,910	27,340	2,220	2,370	6.8	35
53-7051	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators	ST OJT	26,780	21,150	29,600	1,530	1,520	-0.7	28
53-7062	Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers	ST OJT	23,050	15,810	26,680	5,160	5,040	-2.3	157

Firms identified as employing the largest number of people come from unique industry sectors, including: healthcare, retail, educational services, finance and insurance, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and public administration.

Data retrieved from The Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (PA WorkStats provides an overview of some of these employers and respective specific industries.

<b>Lackawanna County Major Employers</b>	
<b>Employer</b>	<b>Industry Sector</b>
Allied Services Foundation	Health Care and Social Assistance
Lackawanna County	Public Administrator
School District of Scranton	Educational Services
Community Medical Center	Health Care and Social Assistance
The Moses Taylor Hospital	Health Care and Social Assistance
Cinram Manufacturing LLC	Manufacturing
Mercy Hospital	Health Care and Social Assistance
Bank of America	Finance and Insurance
University of Scranton	Educational Services
Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Retail Trade
1st Quarter 2007 Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis	

<b>Luzerne County Major Employers</b>	
<b>Employer</b>	<b>Industry Sector</b>
Luzerne County Government	Public Administration
WVHCS-Hospital	Health Care and Social Assistance
Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Retail Trade
Hazleton Area School District	Educational Services
NBC Pittston Merchants Inc.	Transportation and Warehousing
PPL Susquehanna LLC	Utilities
Geisinger-Wyoming Valley	Health Care and Social Assistance
Metz and Associates LTD	Accommodation and Food Services
Onesource Inc.	Admin/Support, Waste Mgmt/ Remediation Services
Wilkes-Barre Area School District	Educational Services
1st Quarter 2007 Source: Center for Workforce Information and Analysis	

### **Professional Schools**

Many professional programs exist within the area’s higher education institutions, including a school of pharmacy and many registered nursing programs.

Wilkes University is in process of starting a three-year law program, expected to launch in fall 2009. Initially, the plan is to restrict class size to 100 students, which will gradually increase to 225 students by year three. The law school will feature a mock courtroom and a law library. Dr. Loren Prescott, Dean of the Law School, came onboard in June 2008.

The Commonwealth Medical College, an allopathic community based medical school headquartered in Scranton, plans to accept its first class in fall 2009. This new regional college will have satellite campus throughout northeastern Pennsylvania to coordinate with the hospitals and specialty programs with the higher education infrastructure.



## Residential

Two critical factors people consider when looking to locate within or relocate to a specific region are housing availability and affordability. These indicators speak to a region's economic health. Without available housing, apartments, condominiums, and townhouses, people are discouraged from moving to a given area. Affordability is determined by considering various households' and determining if local income levels are adequate to purchase a property at the average price.

In 2005, the National Low Income Housing Coalition released a report entitled "Out of Reach," which found a huge difference between family earnings and housing prices. By its standards, a family should pay no more than 28% of its gross household income for a housing payment;

otherwise it is deemed unaffordable. This is known as the 28% housing rule. In 2007 the Third Annual Demographic International Housing Affordability Survey noted that the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre is the country's 31st most affordable housing market in the country, after Louisville, Nashville, Oklahoma City, and Ottawa.<sup>46</sup>

On March 8, 2007, a leading online business publication ranked Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton area the country's 25th top real estate location. BizJournals.com listed the total housing payment as 22%, which ranks 6% lower than the national average for affordable housing. The listing noted that the area's median mortgage payment was just \$561 a month, plus \$121/month in taxes. With a total population of 528,353, the region's median monthly family income was calculated at \$3,102.<sup>47</sup>

Homes in the region's two county seats, Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, are over 50% owner-occupied, with the homes within city limits significantly older than those in surrounding suburbs.<sup>48</sup>



The 2006 American Community Survey noted that 88.3% of Luzerne County housing units, and 87.9% of Lackawanna County housing units were occupied. Luzerne County reported a 11.7% vacancy rate, compared with 12.1% for Lackawanna County.

<b>Housing Occupancy</b>			
<b>OCCUPIED VERSUS VACANT</b>			
<b>2006</b>	<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>Occupied</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
Lackawanna	96,899	87.9%	12.1%
Luzerne	147,321	88.3%	11.7%
<b>2005</b>	<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>Occupied</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
Lackawanna	96,717	88.5%	11.5%
Luzerne	146,911	89.4%	10.6%
<b>OWNER VERSUS RENTER</b>			
<b>2006</b>	<b>Total Occupied Units</b>	<b>Owner Occupied</b>	<b>Renter Occupied</b>
Lackawanna	96,899	87.9%	12.1%
Luzerne	147,321	88.3%	11.7%
<b>2005</b>	<b>Total Occupied Units</b>	<b>Owner Occupied</b>	<b>Renter Occupied</b>
Lackawanna	96,717	88.5%	11.5%
Luzerne	146,911	89.4%	10.6%

Source: 2008 Lackawanna & Luzerne County Indicators Report

While just 9% of Wilkes-Barre's residents live downtown, the downtown area includes 1,855 housing units, with 87% being multi-family units. In fact, downtown homes have an extremely low vacancy rate and generally cost between \$25,000 and \$175,000. Typically, Wilkes-Barre homes remain on the market for just up to three months before being purchased. Downtown rents range from \$250 to \$1,250 per month.

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The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development, in cooperation with the Luzerne County Housing Partnership and the Lackawanna Housing Coalition, is developing a user-friendly website to educate consumers on the home buying process. The website will provide insight on all aspects of the process and will help first time homebuyers review options that may help them to make a better educated decision.

## Retail and Industrial Market



The area's downtown office and retail market, as well as its industrial market, require commercial property use. With new shopping districts arising, and revitalization efforts occurring in both Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, commercial property demand is increasing.

For example, Wilkes-Barre's Main Street has been undergoing revitalization efforts and many formerly empty storefronts are now occupied with new businesses. Long-standing downtown businesses are enjoying the revitalization effort's impact on their operations, including increased foot traffic, tourism spending, and a much improved look and feel. Also on Main Street, the Innovation Center now holds many small start-up businesses, and is directly above a new Barnes and Noble Booksellers – which serves as a joint bookstore for King's College and Wilkes University. The building housing Barnes and Noble has a rich history, as it featured the city's first escalator and was formerly home to Woolworth's, one of downtown Wilkes-Barre's first flagship stores. The building's revitalization constituted a \$6.3 million investment by the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry, with funding from the Greater Wilkes-Barre Development Corporation, King's College, Wilkes University, and Barnes and Noble.<sup>50</sup> Additional development efforts are underway at downtown Wilkes-Barre's Hotel Sterling. The former grand hotel, which has suffered from years of deterioration, is being transformed into office, residential, and retail space. CityVest, a non-profit community development organization, owns the property, is managing the project, and seeking architectural firms to perform work.<sup>51</sup>

In downtown Scranton, revitalization efforts have lured many new shops, restaurants and businesses. New businesses, such as cafés, specialty shops, and various ethnic restaurants have infiltrated city neighborhoods as well. Downtown's Spruce Street, Adams Avenue, North Washington Avenue, Wyoming Avenue and Linden Street have experienced drastic improvements and the streets are largely occupied by salons, restaurants, pubs, boutiques and offices. Construction is also underway on the redevelopment of the 500 block of Lackawanna Avenue, in Scranton. There, a private developer plans to restore building facades, create a public park, and convert the block into restaurants, loft apartments, boutiques, and offices. Other planned downtown Scranton revitalization projects include St. Peter's Square, on Wyoming Avenue and Linden Street, and infrastructure improvement and development projects at the west end of Lackawanna Avenue. There, the Pennsyl-

vania Department of Transportation will construct a new \$5.2 million bridge, and the Lackawanna County Transit System plans to develop an \$11.5 million intermodal center. The intermodal center will serve as a downtown hub for public buses, commercial buses, taxi service and, possibly in the future, passenger rail service to New York.

Mericle Real Estate is one of northeastern Pennsylvania's most well known commercial developers. When Michael's Arts and Crafts was looking to build a distribution center in the Northeast, Mericle helped to the company find a steel-framed building in Hazleton's Humboldt Industrial Park. Attracted by numerous amenities and Hazleton's convenient highway access, Mericle constructed for Michael's a 692,273 square foot facility located in a Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ). Pennsylvania's KOZ program provides tax exemptions to businesses locating in certain blighted or underdeveloped areas.<sup>52</sup>

The Lincoln Property Company (LPC) has issued a report noting that the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre-Hazleton area has available approximately eight million square feet of office space. Scranton's office market is split between its downtown and suburbs, while three quarters of Wilkes-Barre's office market is located in its downtown. LPC estimated the area's vacancy rate at 14% in 2002, but increases have occurred with new development initiatives.

Luzerne County houses four million square feet of commercial and retail space – the largest concentration of commercial space in northeastern Pennsylvania. Wilkes-Barre's 686 businesses bring 14,000 workers into the city each day. Companies such as Pepperjam, Boscov's, GUARD Insurance, Blue Cross of Northeastern PA, Joe Nardone's Gallery of Sound, Barnes and Noble Booksellers, Marquis Art, Bartikowsky Jewelers, and Quizno's call downtown Wilkes-Barre home.

## Downtown Office Space

Downtown Wilkes-Barre offers four million square feet of commercial space, much of which is occupied by organizations including: Blue Cross of NEPA, the Citizen's Voice newspaper, GUARD Insurance Group, Nextar Broadcasting, Penn Millers Insurance Company, PNC Bank, the Times Leader newspaper, and Verizon. In addition, downtown Wilkes-Barre houses 1,000 square feet of government and education offices. Approximately 400,000 square feet of downtown Wilkes-Barre's commercial space is considered to be retail space, 31% of which has been vacant since 2002. Approximately 650,000 square feet of downtown Wilkes-Barre's commercial space is comprised of owner-occupied buildings, such as GUARD Center, Blue Cross, Nextar, and the Times Leader. Finally, 1.68 million square feet of downtown Wilkes-Barre's commercial space is considered multi-tenant, and houses several companies in a single building. Examples of such space include the Wilkes-Barre Center and the Stegmaier Complex.

While the city's office vacancy rate increased from 1992 to 2002, it is largely attributable to an overwhelming expansion of available square footage. To illustrate this point, in 1992, downtown Wilkes-Barre housed 74,715 square feet of office space, with an 8.6% vacancy rate. In 1999, available square footage increased to 262,239 square feet, with a 16.1% vacancy rate. By 2002, available square footage nearly doubled to 451,463 square feet, with a 26.9% vacancy rate. The construction of fifteen new buildings between 1992 and 2002 contributed to today's greater available square footage.

Downtown Wilkes-Barre actually offers lower rental/leasing rates than suburb alternatives. The downtown's base rent is approximately \$12.00 per square foot, versus \$12.75 in the surrounding suburbs.

Other areas close by to downtown Wilkes-Barre offer busy corporate centers, such as Waterfront Professional Park, which has attracted sev-

eral tenants in recent years, including: RejuvenEssence Spa; Munley, Munley and Cartwright; and the Waterfront Banquet and Convention Center. The East Mountain Corporate Center is also home to various businesses and retains an average occupancy rate of about 90%. Rental rates there range from \$16.50 to \$22 per square foot.<sup>53</sup>

Downtown Scranton's available commercial space is also growing. The Mount Pleasant Corporate Center will be constructed in downtown Scranton, within a KOZ-designated area, and with the help of the Scranton Lackawanna Industrial Building Company. After the estimated \$27 million construction project is completed, the center will offer 150,000 square feet of office space, 50,000 square feet of commercial/retail space, and employ 1,000 people.<sup>54</sup>



Other recent commercial construction projects in Scranton include the \$16 million former Southern Union Headquarters, the \$2.3 million Marquee Theaters, the \$11.5 million Casey Parking Garage (at the Hilton

Scranton), the Medallion Parking Garage, the \$3.5 million new police headquarters, and the \$4 million Riverfront Sports Complex. In addition, Scranton's Nay Aug Park has been revitalized with funds put into the pool and waterslide, the amusement park, the John Cleland Greenhouse, the Rose Garden Fence, a tree house and a Wildlife Center.

Occupancy rates and operating costs are lower in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton than in many surrounding areas. In our region, the occupancy/operating cost for Class A office space in a downtown region averages about \$17.50 per square foot. Class B office space in a downtown averages about \$13.50 per square foot. Such rates are considerably lower than those in the Philadelphia suburbs, where Class A and Class B office space costs \$25 per square foot and \$18 per square foot, respectively. In Harrisburg, Class A and Class B office space cost approximately \$19 per square foot and \$16.25 per square foot, respectively, and in Allentown \$20 per square foot and \$15.50 per square foot, respectively.<sup>55</sup>

Operating/Occupancy Costs				
DOWNTOWN				
	Allentown/ Lehigh Valley	Harrisburg/ York/Lebanon	Wilkes-Barre/ Scranton	Philadelphia
Class A Office	\$20.00	\$19.00	\$17.50	\$25.00
Class B Office	\$15.50	\$16.25	\$13.50	\$18.00
SUBURBAN				
	Allentown/ Lehigh Valley	Harrisburg/ York/Lebanon	Wilkes-Barre/ Scranton	Philadelphia
Class A Office	\$21.00	\$18.25	\$20.00	\$25.00
Class B Office	\$16.25	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$18.00

## Rental Afforbability

A significant portion of Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties' residents are renters. In Luzerne County, 39,500 residents (30%) live in rental units; this compares with 33.1% of Americans. In Lackawanna County, approximately 27,738 residents (32.4%) live in rental units.<sup>56</sup>

Severe unaffordable housing is determined when a renter pays more than 50% of his or her gross income toward rent. In 2003, it was deemed that one-third of U.S. renters paid too much for their rent. At the time, 47% of U.S. renters paid more than 30% of their income toward rent.<sup>57</sup>

Both Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties rank below state averages in terms of unaffordable housing. Luzerne County has developed a Rental Housing Program that seeks to "preserve affordable rental housing opportunities through the preservation of existing rental units and the development of new rental units." The program particularly aims to protect low income families in need of affordable housing in areas where there is little or no rental units available.<sup>58</sup> Luzerne County's rental affordability has increased from 0.72% to 0.88% between 2002 and 2003. The county has recorded that 128,151 households, with a median annual income of \$34,533, rent.<sup>59</sup>

Lackawanna County residents pay considerably less a month in rent than the state average. As of the 2000 Census, Lackawanna County held a median monthly rent of \$253, compared with the \$438 state average.<sup>60</sup>

In 2006, Lackawanna County reported a median annual household income of \$38,915 and a median monthly rent of \$567. On an annual basis, 17.5% of income was required to pay rent, which ranked the second highest of the four counties examined. Lackawanna County's percentage of annual income required to cover annual rent in 2006 increased from 17.3% in 2005.

Luzerne County reported a 2006 median annual household income of \$39,687 and a median monthly rent of \$546. Annually, 16.5% of income was required to pay rent, which was the third highest of the counties examined. Luzerne County's percentage of annual income required to cover annual rent decreased from 16.8% in 2005.

Both Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties have fared well in foreclosure

### Rental Affordability Comparison

	2005			2006		
County	Median Household Income	Median Rent	% of Income for Rent	Median household Income	Median Rent	% of Income for Rent
Lackawanna	\$37,153	\$536	17.30%	\$38,915	\$567	17.50%
Luzerne	\$37,240	\$520	16.80%	\$39,687	\$546	16.50%

*Source: 2008 Lackawanna Luzerne Counties Indicators Report*

rates attributable to market declines. Both counties have seen steady growth and expect more, with the migration of families from New York and New Jersey – in search of more affordable housing and improved quality of life.

According to a recent study from The Institute, migration continues to grow in Luzerne County. In June 2006, and again in June 2007, the county received fantastic data – its population estimate revealed a slight increase from 2004 to 2005 and from 2005 to 2006.<sup>61</sup>

## Broadband

The days of dial up Internet connections fading and we are in a world where everything happens faster than ever before. Sending and receiving pictures, accessing an abundance of interactive websites, and downloading new features requires the rapid connection of a Digital Subscriber Line (DSL).

Broadband gained popularity in 2004, when its use in American households nearly doubled. In October 2004, approximately 413,000 U.S. households used fiber optic connections, a 232,700-household increase over the previous year. The state government played a significant role in this increase, thanks to Governor Rendell's renewal of House Bill 30, which sought to increase broadband deployment. The bill allocated over \$100 million to the community and \$60 million to schools for upgrading broadband systems.<sup>62</sup>

In Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties, broadband service is largely available. According to Luzerne County's 2005 Land Use and Growth Management report, the Luzerne County Courthouse is now wired with fiber optic, high-speed Internet connections and downtown Wilkes-Barre offers Wi-Fi access. Wilkes-Barre City's "Wirefree Wilkes-Barre" program is a community initiative in conjunction with Luzerne County, King's College and Wilkes University, which aims to convert the entire city to broadband internet access.<sup>63</sup> Plans include interconnecting Wilkes-Barre's broadband system with the area colleges, so all users get the most from their Internet experience; utilizing Wi-Fi enabled cameras to enhance security on city streets; encouraging more interaction between government and constituents; and promoting job and economic growth opportunities to market an improved city image.<sup>64</sup> While the idea and planning for this initiative first launched in 2004 when Mayor Tom Leighton took office, the city hopes to see it fully implemented this

year.

In May 2007, the City of Wilkes-Barre announced that it had Frontier Communications to install a wireless infrastructure at no cost to taxpayers.<sup>65</sup>

In Lackawanna County, downtown Scranton's Courthouse Square offers total Wi-Fi access. Those in the area who wish to connect may pay a small cost to get on the network. Public outdoor access to the Wi-Fi network makes the city more attractive than ever before.

Verizon, Comcast and other cable companies also offer DSL service throughout much of Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties.<sup>66</sup>

## Energy

The Lackawanna/Luzerne County region offers vast energy utility services. While utility costs are always a concern, such rates remain lower than other areas of the country.

The area's major energy providers include:

- UGI Penn Natural Gas, based in Wilkes-Barre, is the region's largest natural gas distribution company. The company serves approximately 156,000 customers in 13 Pennsylvania counties.
- UGI, Inc.'s other Pennsylvania divisions provide electric service to more 60,000 customers in northeastern Pennsylvania, and natural gas service to approximately 272,000 customers throughout 14 Pennsylvania counties.<sup>67</sup>
- PPL sells electricity and natural gas to nearly six million customers from the United States to Canada and Latin America. In Pennsylvania,

the company serves 1.4 million customers.<sup>68</sup>

## Communications

Since the merger of Bell Atlantic and GTE, Verizon became the region's top communications utility – providing telephone and Internet service. Verizon's regional central office is located in Scranton, and serves as a connection point for inter-exchange carriers.<sup>69</sup>

Also, the recent take over of Commonwealth Telephone by Frontier Communications, a part of Citizens Communication Company, created Frontier Communications in Luzerne County. Frontier provides telephone, cable and Internet service. As previously mentioned, Frontier is leading Wilkes-Barre's wireless Internet project.

Other cable providers in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties include: Service Electric Cable TV, Adelphia Cable TV, Metrocast Communications, and Blue Ridge Communications. Various satellite service providers, such as Direct TV, also serve areas of the region.

## Water Utility

Pennsylvania-American Water Company (PAWC) is northeastern Pennsylvania's single water utility. PAWC is the state's largest regulated water utility and serves more than two million people in 372 Pennsylvania communities. Pennsylvania-American Water is a division of RWE AG, a German company.<sup>70</sup> PAWC has 38 water treatment facilities, three wastewater facilities, and about 8,900 miles of pipeline to service its customers.

While PAWC is the leading water utility for Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, and surrounding areas, Hazelton actually receives its water supply from

the Hazelton City Authority. The Authority employs American Water Services, Inc. to lend its water industry professionals. These trained water experts help to treat, distribute, and manage water resources in the City of Hazelton.<sup>71</sup>

## Sewer & Wastewater

Wastewater is water and sewage that enters a treatment plant from homes, industries, schools and businesses, as well as some storm runoff and ground water.

The Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority (WVSA) has provided wastewater treatment service to Luzerne County residents since 1962. Its service area includes 35 municipalities, from Harvey's Lake to Pittston to Newport Township. Luzerne County's more rural townships typically utilize individual septic systems for wastewater disposal.

More than one-quarter million residents benefit from the wastewater treatment service provided by WVSA, which serves about 95,000 equivalent dwelling units in its service area. At present, WVSA receives and treats an average of 25 million gallons of wastewater per day.<sup>72</sup>

The Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority services the City of Hazleton, the Borough of West Hazleton, and areas of Hazel Township, including the Valmont Industrial Park, and portions of Sugarloaf Township.<sup>73</sup>

Lackawanna County has five sewer authorities, including: the Scranton Sewer Authority, the Lackawanna River Basin Sewer Authority, the Lower Lackawanna Valley Sanitary Authority, the Clarks Summit/South Abington Joint Sewer Authority, and the Covington Township Sewer Authority. Residents of rural Lackawanna County townships and municipalities also utilize individual septic systems for wastewater

removal.<sup>74</sup>

The Scranton Sewer Authority (SSA) owns the wastewater collection, conveyance and treatment system serving the City of Scranton and the Borough of Dunmore. The SSA was appointed by the City of Scranton to act as its agent in maintaining its wastewater collection, conveyance and treatment operations, which are collectively known as the Scranton Sewer System.

The SSA also serves adjacent portions of the Lower Lackawanna Valley Sanitary Authority (LLVSA) and the Lackawanna River Basin Sewer Authority (LRBSA). The LLVSA service area includes part of the Borough of Taylor. The LRBSA service area includes the Borough of Dickson City, also known as the Sinawa Sewer System, and Montage Mountain, also known as the Montage Sewer District, in the Borough of Moosic.

## Interstates

Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties include a major highway system, comprised of Interstates 80, 380, 81, and 476 (also known as the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike – I-276).

Interstates 80 and 380 run east-west, while Interstates 81, and 476 run north-south. Talks are underway to determine if I-80 should become a toll road managed by the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission. In addition, negotiations are underway for the Pennsylvania Turnpike to be leased and maintained by a private entity.

Pennsylvania's highway system provides for convenient access between Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. In the last two years, funds have been allocated to numerous transportation projects, including:

- \$4.5 million for the Valley View Business Park access road
- \$3 million for the I-81 Widening Project in the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton corridor
- \$2.5 million for the South Valley Parkway development - a four lane highway to connect northern and southern Luzerne County
- \$1 million for the Scranton Intermodal Transportation Center<sup>75</sup>

Construction on a new Intermodal Transportation Center in Luzerne County is also underway in downtown Wilkes-Barre – behind the Provincial Towers Apartment Complex on South Washington Street. The new intermodal center will serve all Luzerne County Transportation Authority (LCTA) bus passengers and commercial operated bus lines. A walkway to Public Square is also part of the plan. This will alleviate downtown congestion in places such as Public Square, which is often occupied by arriving and departing buses, and will offer additional downtown parking space.

Each county maintains several thousand miles of roadways, which are considered second and third tier transportation arteries.

## Public Transportation

Public transportation is vital to county residents, and is becoming increasingly important as fuel costs and environmental concerns force more and more drivers to consider more cost and energy-efficient alternatives. Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties each have three major bus lines: Greyhound, Martz, County of Lackawanna Transportation System (COLTS), and Luzerne County Transportation Authority (LCTA). Hazleton Public Transit also offers area residents its public transportation services. Both of these Luzerne County transit organizations work together to coordinate routes that provide broad access throughout the county.

## Airports



**Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport (AVP)**, located in Avoca, is a fully equipped, state-of-the-art international operation. While located in Luzerne County just off I-81, AVP is centrally located for Luzerne and Lackawanna County residents. AVP encompasses 880 acres and it rests at 962 feet above sea level. Five major airlines currently fly from this location. Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties also offer smaller airports, including: Hazelton Municipal Airport and Wyoming Valley Airport. Lehigh Valley International Airport (LVIA), located in Allentown, is about 60 miles south of the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area.<sup>76</sup>

## Rail

The area has a network of freight railroads, with short lines such as the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad, the Luzerne and Susquehanna Railroad, the New York, Susquehanna, and Western Railway Co., the North Shore Railroad Co., Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad, and Stourbridge Railroad Co. Freight lines include Canadian Pacific Railway and the Norfolk Southern Railway Co.

Non Operator railroad owners include: the Lackawanna Honesdale Shippers Association Inc., Luzerne County Railroad Corporation, the PA Northeast Regional Authority, and the SEDA COG Joint Rail Authority.<sup>77</sup> Another project on the horizon is the connection between Scranton and New York City. Known as the Lackawanna Cutoff, the railway would utilize existing freight right of ways to provide service from Scranton to Hoboken, and then on to New York's Penn Station. In what is estimated to cost \$350 million (estimate in 2004) the project would complete reconstruction of the line that would include track and signal improvements, new stations, parking facilities, a train storage yard, and rail rolling stock. New Jersey Transit would operate the service.<sup>78</sup>

## Trucking

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties offer large trucking companies that move goods throughout the region and the country. Such companies include: Kane Trucking, Martini, Inc., Estes Express Lines and Road Scholar Transport.

Fed-Ex, UPS and DHL all have major distribution hubs in the region that provide both ground and air shipping/delivery.

# Medical Care

Lackawanna and Luzerne County residents may choose to use various medical care facilities. Lackawanna County offers five hospitals, the three largest of which include Community Medical Center, Moses Taylor, and Mercy Hospital, all located in Scranton. Other hospitals include: Marian Community Hospital, in Carbondale, Mid Valley Hospital, in Peckville, and Healthsound Scranton Surgery and Laser Center.



Scranton is also home to the campus of Allied Services, a rehabilitation complex. Allied helps the elderly and disabled take back control of their lives in order to be self-sufficient members of society. Further, the Northeast Regional Cancer Institute is located on the University of Scranton campus. It hosts programs for cancer patients and family members to help triumph or endure the disease. Also, Saint Joseph's Center

of Scranton helps those dealing with neurological problems by raising cognitive awareness. In addition to physical therapy, St. Joseph's uses music and recreational activities to engage patients.

Luzerne County's major medical care facilities include the former Hazelton General Hospital and Hazelton - St. Joseph Medical Center, which combined to form the Greater Hazelton Alliance, which, with more than 100 physicians, provides a broad range of medical services.

Located in Wilkes-Barre Township, Wilkes-Barre's Veteran's Memorial Hospital is a stoic sight from Highway 315. The building has 116 hospital beds, 105 nursing home beds, and ten substance abuse residential rehabilitation treatment program beds. Veterans from throughout Northeast and Central Pennsylvania, as well as Southern New York may utilize the institution's services.

Wilkes-Barre's VA Medical Center is affiliated with the Drexel University College of Medicine, the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, St. Luke's Hospital & Health Network, and the Pennsylvania College of Optometry.<sup>79</sup>

In 2005, South Wilkes-Barre's Mercy Hospital changed ownership from the Sisters of Mercy to the Geisinger Health System, based in Danville, Pennsylvania. Now called Geisinger South Wilkes-Barre, the facility remains a top notch medical care institution. Geisinger also operates Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center located in Plains Township. Serving Luzerne County residents for over 30 years, Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center is nationally recognized as a Solucient Top 100 Hospital. Its campus includes the Janet Weis Children's Hospital Pediatrics Unit and the Heart Hospital, two of the region's most reputable health care facilities. In addition, Marworth is a Geisinger Health System operated center for alcohol and chemical dependencies, heart

disease and cancer patients. It has a neurosciences program and various research centers.<sup>80</sup>

Luzerne County's largest medical facility is the Wyoming Valley Health Care System, created through the late 1990's merger of Nesbitt Memorial Hospital, in Kingston, and Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, in the city's north section. Nesbitt's acute services were transferred over to Wilkes-Barre General, resulting in a staff of 400+ physicians and 50 or more specialists. Wilkes-Barre General houses northeastern Pennsylvania's only Gamma Knife Center, which treats brain maladies (cancerous tumors, blood vessel abnormalities and neurological disorders). In addition, the hospital offers obstetric, prostate, skin cancer, and thyroid surgeries, along with sentinel node biopsies. Wyoming Valley Healthcare System is currently waiting approval to be sold to a for profit healthcare corporation.

Blue Cross of Northeastern PA is the region's leading health care provider. Established in 1938, Blue Cross today provides coverage to some 600,000 Northeast Pennsylvanians. The company serves residents and businesses in thirteen Pennsylvania counties, and is headquartered in downtown Wilkes-Barre.<sup>81</sup>

## **New Medical School**

In June 2005, the Northeast Pennsylvania Medical Education Development Consortium (MEDC) was formed to initiate the development of a medical college. This grassroots organization engaged the firm of TrippUmbach to conduct a feasibility study on development of a regional medical college. Upon the study's completion, the committee moved forward with its application to the Pennsylvania Department of Health to officially open the Commonwealth Medical College, which is expected to begin classes in a temporary facility in 2009.<sup>82</sup>

The medical school is expected to provide an economic boom to the region by providing jobs to faculty, staff, and those involved in the construction trade who will construct the permanent facilities. According to TrippUmbach's report, the business volume impact may be very significant. The study further examines how the region and state would directly benefit from capital improvements, related goods and services, and faculty, employee, and student spending. The study notes that by 2015, when the college would be fully operational, the business volume impact on northeastern Pennsylvania will equal \$46 million in enhanced economic activity. Impact on Pennsylvania as a whole may reach \$71 million annually. Additionally, by 2025 the college's annual impact on the region is expected to increase to \$54 million, and the impact on the state is expected to reach \$85 million.

As stated in the study, "Business volume impacts will take the form of expansions of existing businesses in multiple sectors of the economy (government, technology based manufacturing, service industries, etc.) and the creation of new businesses developed to meet the needs of the proposed medical college and its related populations."

Construction of the school itself, and the related opportunities it is expected to create, is projected to increase Pennsylvania's business volume by approximately \$140 million annually.

The college will be located in downtown Scranton, and is expected to increase business volume by approximately \$28.3 million by 2015 and \$33.8 million by 2025. Such impacts are attributable to related spending patterns of students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

It is also expected that by 2015, the college will generate nearly 1,000 full-time equivalent jobs in Pennsylvania, including direct employment as well as ancillary jobs. TrippUmbach goes further in stating that 550 of these jobs would be held by area residents, and that approximately 225 positions would be filled by Scranton residents. Most jobs created by medical colleges are higher paying than those created by other

organizations, and often provide employees with significant health care benefits.

Construction of the college itself is expected to create more than 1,000 direct and indirect full-time jobs between 2006 and 2009.

Both the region and Pennsylvania as a whole can expect to realize various benefits in terms of increased revenue through sales taxes, corporate net income taxes, and other business taxes paid by companies receiving medical college-related business. It is projected that total statewide government revenue attributable to the project could reach \$5 million annually.

As business volume increases, the statewide government impact resulting from operations will also increase to almost \$6 million in 2025.

TrippUmbach also studied the impact that research funding to the medical college could have. It estimates that the college could expect to receive \$11 million in research funding in 2015 and \$30 million in funding by 2025. Such funding is likely to come from the National Institutes of Health.<sup>83</sup>

# Retail

## Businesses

Boscov's has been downtown Wilkes-Barre's anchor store since the early 1980's, when most other retailers left the area during an economic downturn. As they left, Boscov's created a four story department store equipped with goods for men, women, children, and a sleuth of others. As the downtown went through a period of recession, owner Al Boscov remained confident in the city's Renaissance. Today, the department store is credited as being Wilkes-Barre's anchor for enduring its tough times and now reaping benefits of better times.

When Wilkes-Barre Mayor Tom Leighton took office, he inherited a crumbling downtown and, hence, sought to make improvements. Since then, downtown Wilkes-Barre has experienced drastic improvements, and has become home to new businesses, and revitalized existing businesses.

## Taxable Sales

Pennsylvania residents enjoy the fact that they do not pay state sales tax on grocery store food items. However, according to the Pennsylvania Department of revenue, state sales tax is imposed "on all items in retail, consumption, rental, or use of tangible personal property."

This source of funds is a way for Pennsylvania and its municipalities to generate revenue and

provide needed public services, such as road and bridge repair, various health and human services, and various maintenance and improvement projects. There are, however, certain entities exempt from paying sales taxes. Government groups, non-profit agencies, and various charities all can apply for tax exemption. Certain exemptions also are made for different business activities, such as manufacturing, processing, farming, dairying, agriculture, horticulture, floriculture or aquaculture and public utilities.<sup>84</sup>

Sales tax is applied to items in nearly any retail store in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties. It gets tricky in certain areas, though. For instance, magazines are taxable, but newspapers (ones that are qualified to carry legal ads) are not. All toys, hobby equipment, books, household decorations and goods, toiletries, cleaning supplies, most papers, jewelry, clothing accessories, some shoes, business supplies, and tobacco (to name a few) are taxable. Boxed food, diapers, acne treatments, many over-the-counter medicines, bandages, drapes, U.S. flags, and parking fees and vegetable seeds are not taxable.<sup>85</sup> Practically all toiletries are taxable, with the exception of toothbrushes and toothpaste.<sup>86</sup>

Clothing as a broad topic is often difficult to deem taxable or non-taxable. Taxable items include: accessories, bridal apparel, corsages, costumes, fur articles, gloves, graduation clothing, handkerchiefs, prom dresses, safety clothing, sheepskin coats, tuxedos and umbrellas. Non-taxable clothing items include:



aprons, belts, boots and shoes for everyday wear, garters, girdles, gym suits, headwear, pantyhose, hunting clothing, leotards, leather apparel, lingerie, neckwear, nightgowns, rainwear, scarves, scout uniforms, stockings, suspenders, tee-shirts, underclothing and work clothes.<sup>87</sup> For a complete listing of taxable and non taxable goods, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue homepage at <http://www.revenue.state.pa.us/revenue>.

A 6% sales use tax is impeded upon any taxable item purchased in Pennsylvania. Such monies are used for a variety of government spending. While Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties both have high sales tax revenues, Lackawanna County collects the larger amount.

## Shopping Areas

Considering the tremendous growth of the Scranton and Wilkes-Barre area, an Ohio-based realty group determined that a mid point between the two cities would be an ideal location for a shopping and lifestyle center. Anderson Realty constructed the Shoppes at Montage, located in Lackawanna County, and practically on the border of Luzerne County. The Shoppes, which are easily accessible from I-81, opened in March 2007. The 300,000 square foot center offers dozens of specialty shops, restaurants, walkways, and gathering spaces.

Some of the shops located at Montage Mountain include: Aeropostale, Coldwater Creek, The Children's Place, Eddie Bauer, Olympia Sports, An Aveda Concept Salon, The Sapphire Salon and Spa, Sleepy's, Portrait Innovations, Icing by Claire's, the Guitar Center, Chiccos, and J.Jill.<sup>88</sup>

Lackawanna County includes two additional shopping malls, including the Mall at Steamtown, in downtown Scranton, and the Viewmont Mall, in Dickson City. The Steamtown Mall offers more than 70 retail establishments, including department stores, a food court, specialty stores,

full-service restaurants, banks and salons. Similarly, the Viewmont Mall also includes more than 70 retail establishments, a food court, full-service restaurants, banks, and salons.

In Luzerne County, Hazleton's Laurel Mall offers shoppers about 70 retail options, with three large department stores.<sup>89</sup> Wilkes-Barre Township's Wyoming Valley Mall is a newly refurbished shopping mall with over 80 retail offerings, including department stores, specialty stores, salons, banks and restaurants.<sup>90</sup>

Wilkes-Barre Township's recently constructed Arena Hub Plaza and the Wilkes-Barre Commons offers many shopping choices, including: Target, Michael's, Sneaker King, Dress Barn, Lowes, Dick's Sporting Goods, Old Navy, and Bed, Bath, and Beyond, among others. Also, located just down the road is Wegman's, one of the East's finest grocery stores, which offers gourmet prepared foods, fresh vegetables, specialty shops, and a large selection of cheeses, breads, seafood, and organic options.

In 2005, 14,710 workers were employed Lackawanna County's retail trade sector, while 17,933 workers were similarly employed in Luzerne County.<sup>91</sup> Between 2004 and 2005, 241 new business establishments opened in Luzerne County, compared with 192 in Lackawanna County.<sup>92</sup>

Both counties have considerable shopping districts, which have grown tremendously over time and are certainly bound for continued expansion.

## Hospitality

The Lackawanna and Luzerne County region offers a tremendous variety of cuisine offerings, including sushi bars, home made pasta, pizza, Thai and Indian food, Mexican, German, Polish, or Chinese delicacies. Additionally, each county offers numerous establishments that serve traditional American cuisine like seafood, steaks, and burgers. These restaurants come in the form of small, quaint, and quiet fine dining restaurants, to spots that are vibrant, trendy or uniquely themed. Family owned establishments are numerous and can be small and intimate or large enough to cater a banquet.



Just north of Pittston in Luzerne County is Old Forge – a town famous for one main food – its pizza. With over a dozen pizza shops in this small town, it’s often referred to as the “pizza capital of the world.”

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2002 Luzerne County’s full-service restaurants generated \$168,558,000 in sales, shipments, and receipts in 2002. At the time, there were 289 establishments, which employed 5,266 people, and generated an annual payroll of \$53,409,000. For the same time period, Lackawanna County’s 190 full-service restaurants generated \$90,250,000 in sales, shipments, and receipts. Its establishments employed 2,717 people and generated an annual payroll of \$26,713,000.<sup>93</sup>

Wilkes-Barre’s Public Square also features a bustling Farmer’s Market during the summer months, as does Scranton at the Co-Op Farmer’s Night Market – located just a short distance from the downtown. Each offers fresh vegetable food vendors with unique faire.

# Life in Northeastern Pennsylvania

## Local Trends



Northeastern Pennsylvania is becoming an exciting place to be. Revitalization of urban centers is paramount to both counties. The cities of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre are transforming with new businesses in their downtowns.

With numerous colleges and universities, both cities are largely influenced by young adults and cater to young adults. Both areas offer trail systems for walkers, joggers, and bikers, and riverfront, countryside, and mountainous amenities.

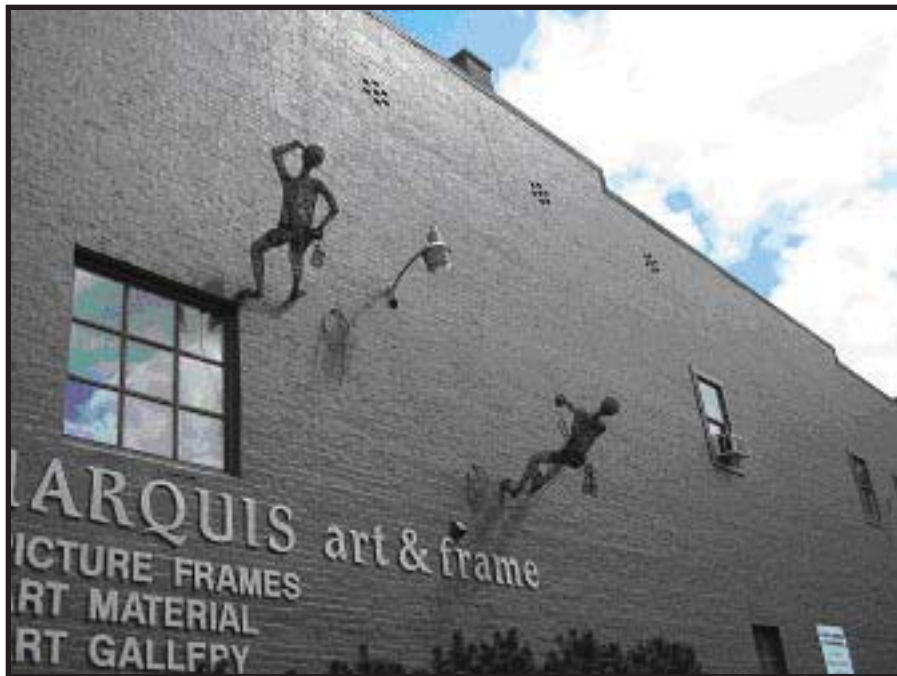
New housing is developing in Wilkes-Barre, with the renovation of the former Hotel Sterling. The hotel will be transformed into condominiums and apartments. Located directly across from the newly constructed Riverwalk Project, the Hotel Sterling will offer prime views of the Susquehanna River. Additional new residential living is planned for the space above the city's new theater complex. An Employer Assisted Housing initiative, developed by the current administration, offers incentives to workers from their employers located within the city. Such incentives may come in the form of education for first time buyers, a down payment on a property located in the city, or lower interest rates on home purchases.

With 3.9% of forecasted growth in 2008, Scranton was listed in Money Magazine as 4th on its list of the nation's 100 biggest housing markets



3.9%. The city's housing options are plentiful and include new and renovated single family homes, townhouses, loft apartments and condominiums. Although more people are seeking to locate within urban centers, real estate in Scranton is still available at largely affordable prices.

A resurgence of the arts is also occurring. More specifically, with the creation of murals on downtown buildings and public spaces, and programs such as Third Friday Artwalk in Wilkes-Barre, and First Friday and Second Saturday, in Scranton, local artists are encouraged to exhibit their work in a number of promoted downtown locations.



Lackawanna County established the Council on Education and Culture, which recognizes the value of culture, education, and the arts. The Council is the first of its kind in Pennsylvania in Lackawanna County, and offers a stable source of arts funding and collaborative educational programs. The programs not only reach a broad segment of Lackawanna

County residents, but also focus on reaching the region's underserved and diverse populations.<sup>94</sup>

Luzerne County has recently undergone a study to establish the feasibility of a similar arts council. Development of a centralized agency for local arts and culture organizations may include advocacy, direction, and the opportunity to apply for grant dollars to help support various projects or productions.

This renaissance of arts and culture has enhanced the attractiveness of not just the region's urban centers, but its outlying areas as well. Residents and visitors to the region look for arts and culture offerings and recreation opportunities to enhance their experience. Their spending dollars obviously impact local economies.

## Areas of Attraction

Northeastern Pennsylvania offers an excellent quality of life for residents and those looking to relocate or visit. Major areas of attraction include: performance halls, theaters, recreational projects – such as hiking trails, water skiing, snow skiing, hunting, fishing and boating activities – and electrifying sports teams that garner a following wherever they travel.

The region has a lively entertainment atmosphere, including Toyota Pavilion at Montage Mountain, which hosts concerts that have featured Dave Matthews, Toby Keith, and Tom Petty. With room for over 16,000 between its huge lawn and spacious covered seating, it is a favorite location for area entertainment.

Sno Mountain, formerly known as Montage Ski Area, is located directly off of I-81 in Lackawanna County and offers 21 trails and six lifts, as well as tubing. The resort is open all winter for experts, beginners, and

anyone looking to just enjoy the outdoors. Sno Mountain anticipates the opening of its outdoor water park in summer 2008.

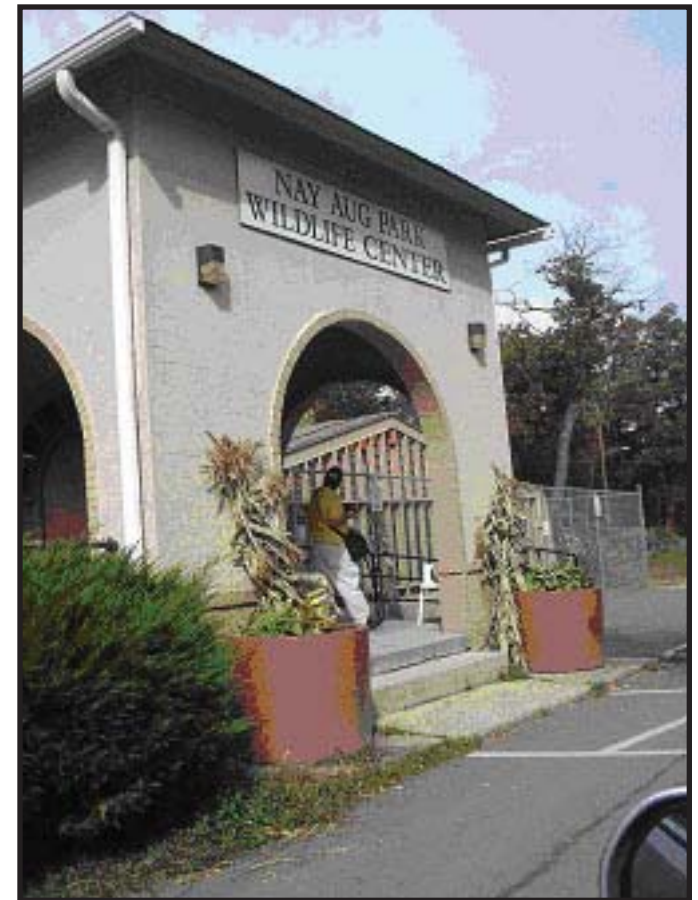


In addition to the Shoppes at Montage, located in the same area is Cinemark movie theater. With 20 wall-to-wall screens and stadium seating, Cinemark is the perfect place to catch a movie, escape bad weather for a couple of hours, or for a lovely date night.

Also on Montage Mountain, baseball fans pack the stands to see the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Yankees, the New York Yankee's Triple A farm team.

Wilkes-Barre's new R/C Movies 14 Theater is certainly helping to revitalize the downtown. The grand building on Northampton Street was recently constructed and is already helping the area to flourish, as city and county officials are looking to beautify Wilkes-Barre, and encourage residents and visitors to come shop, see a movie, and eat in the downtown.

The Luzerne County Commissioners, Flood Protection Authority, and Wyoming Valley Levee Raising Team are currently refurbishing the Susquehanna's riverfront that faces Wilkes-Barre so that residents can spend more time enjoying the riverfront and its beauty. Sasaki Associates will be constructing two sixty-foot-wide portals that provide access to the Susquehanna, a 700-seat amphitheater on the riverbank for performances and gatherings, as well as walking paths, benches, and areas for relaxation. The \$22.6 million project is funded through Luzerne County, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Department of Conservation and National Resources and the Federal Government.<sup>95</sup>



Another mammoth project in Luzerne County during recent years was construction of Wachovia Arena, home to the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins – the Pittsburgh Penguins’ NHL minor league team. The arena also hosts various performers, which have included the American Idol stars tour, Rod Stewart, Cher, Elton John, and Keith Urban. In addition to the Penguins, the arena has an in-house football team, the Pioneers of the af2 Arena Football League.<sup>96</sup>



Each county seat offers one or two venues for live theater and musical performances, including the Scranton Cultural Center at the Masonic Temple, in Scranton, and the F.M. Kirby Center, and the Little Theatre, in Wilkes-Barre. Each urban institution of higher education also offers production facilities that are open for the public to attend. In addition, the institutions have gallery space that stages various local and national art exhibits.

## Lodging

Directly across from Wachovia Arena is the brand new Hilton-Garden Inn. Right around the corner is the Holiday Inn, connected to TGI Fridays, and down the road is the Woodlands Inn and Resort, a favorite party and sleep spot that includes grand decks, Thyme restaurant, pool, spas, and several bar, meeting and gathering areas.

In downtown Wilkes-Barre, there are two flagship hotels, the Ramada on Public Square and Genetti's Best Western on the corner of Market Street and Pennsylvania Boulevard. Both have remained downtown despite periods of hardship and are expected to be there as the downtown reverses over the next several years.

Hazleton also has a number of lodging options with the Hampton Inn and Fairfield Inn, located directly off I-81, and the Ramada, located within the city limits on Route 309.

Lackawanna County offers a number of lodging establishments as well. The Radisson Scranton at Lackawanna Station is a favorite because of its grand ball rooms, prime location, and ideal staff. It is often the site of weddings, parties, and big Scranton events. Downtown Scranton also offers the recently opened Hilton Hotel. Other Lackawanna County hotels include the Clarion, on Meadow Avenue, as well as various hotels located on Montage Mountain, and throughout the region.

## Recreation

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties host many festivals and fairs with broad appeal.

In Wilkes-Barre, the Farmer's Market takes place every Thursday during summer. The market features many vendors selling fresh fruits and

vegetables, ready-to-eat foods like gyros and pizza, as well as crafts, face painting and other items.

Wilkes-Barre's Cherry Blossom Festival includes many artisans selling their work, as well as crafts and great food.

The city also hosts a St. Patrick's Day Parade through downtown, as well as Independence Day celebrations and fireworks at Kirby Park. These events bring out families and friends for holiday celebrations.

Scranton's St. Patrick's Day Parade is nationally acclaimed and recognized as one of the nation's largest celebrations. Floats, marchers, musicians and vendors come out each year to celebrate Irish descent.



Held each year on December 31st, First Night Scranton welcomes in the New Year with artistic performances, fireworks, carnival rides, processions and music.<sup>97</sup>

Scranton also honors its large Italian-American population on Labor Day weekend's "La Festa Italiana". This sizzling celebration features fine Italian foods and pastries, as well as exhibits, music and activities.



## Famous Residents

Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties have their share of famous residents. Having such a rich culture, strong educational system, and the rearing of children with core, hometown values has allowed the region to see some

of the most notable people in the nation flourish from its backyard.

The following people are publicly documented as notable natives or one-time residents:

- Joseph Biden: Long-standing U.S. Senator and the 2008 Democratic vice presidential nominee
- Lisa Caputo: former Hillary Clinton Press Secretary
- Robert Casey, Jr: U.S. Senator
- Judy McGrath: Chairman and CEO, MTV Network
- Gerry McNamara: starter for Syracuse University's 2003 NCAA National Championship basketball team
- Bill O'Reilly: MSNBC political commentator, who began his broadcast career at WNEP-TV, in Moosic
- Robert Reich: U.S. Secretary of Labor during the Clinton administration
- William Scranton: former Pennsylvania Governor, United States Ambassador to the United Nations, a contender for the 1964 Republican presidential nominee
- Lauren Weisberger: author of bestselling novel, *The Devil Wears Prada*<sup>98</sup>

## Climate

Northeastern Pennsylvania has the perfect mix of temperate weather conditions – meaning it has four distinct seasons, with temperatures reaching the 90s in the summer months, and often dipping into the teens during winter – as well as a crisp fall and fresh spring. Typically, temperatures are colder in mountainous regions like Bear Creek, Mountain Top, and Carbondale, and about five to ten degrees warmer in valley cities, like Kingston, Dunmore, and Scranton.

## Safety

Lackawanna County has seen its crime index offenses increase, yet remain lower than most other regions of similar size. With 2,915 more crimes committed in Wilkes-Barre during 2005 than in 2000, all crimes have jumped, including: robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft, and motor vehicle theft. It is important to note, however, that crime in both counties remains lower than peer cities and counties.

According to JUSC's 2008 Lackawanna Luzerne Counties Indicators Report, Lackawanna County recently reported a decrease in its number of violent crimes, from 636 in 2005 to 521 in 2006. It reported no murders during 2006, and the number of both rape and aggravated assault incidents decreased by 26 and 97, respectively. The county's only increase in violent crimes in 2006 was robbery, during which 124 occurred, compared with 112 in 2005. Lackawanna County's property crimes increased from 4,054 in 2005 to 4,266 in 2006. In addition, both burglary and larceny crimes increased from 2005 to 2006, while motor vehicle thefts and arson crimes decreased slightly.

The report also details that from 2005 to 2006, Luzerne County experienced a minimal increase in violent crimes. Rape and robbery crimes decreased (by 10 and 35, respectively), while murder and aggravated assault crimes increased (by 4 and 51, respectively). Conversely, the county experienced quite a significant drop in property crimes, which shifted from 7,040 in 2005 to 6,495 in 2006. Overall, Luzerne County experienced decreases in all crimes from 2005 to 2006, with the exception of motor vehicle theft, which increased from 434 to 471.

# About *The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development*



## **Description**

Headquartered in Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, The Institute mobilizes the resources of regional institutions of higher education to engage communities in planning that is informed by research, energized by broad participation, and validated by successful implementation.

The Institute utilizes students and faculty from its collaborating institutions of higher education to conduct research, data analysis, and publication of white papers. Additionally, The Institute researches, conducts and convenes on a broad range of topics for local government, business, K-12 education and the business community. The Institute does not assume the role of implementer.

The Institute's annual Indicators Report is a comprehensive document that tracks more than 100 economic indicators for both Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties. In addition, the report utilizes comparison counties in Pennsylvania to gauge northeastern Pennsylvania's progress over time.

## **Partners**

The Institute is managed by Wilkes University, and collaborates closely with Keystone College, King's College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Pennsylvania State University/Wilkes-Barre and the University of Scranton.

# Resources

## **Penn's Northeast**

1151 Oak St.  
Pittston, PA 18640  
570-883-0504  
1-800-317-1313  
[info@pennsnortheast.com](mailto:info@pennsnortheast.com)

## **Small Business Development Centers**

***Wilkes University***  
Small Business Development Center  
Innovation Center, Suite 200  
7 South Main Street  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-1706  
Phone: (570) 408-4340  
Fax: (570) 408-9854  
[SBDC@wilkes.edu](mailto:SBDC@wilkes.edu)

***The University of Scranton***  
Small Business Development Center  
411- 413 Quincy Avenue (Gallery House)  
Scranton, PA 18510-4639  
(570) 941-7588  
[sbdc@scranton.edu](mailto:sbdc@scranton.edu)

## **Chambers**

### ***LACKAWANNA COUNTY***

**The Greater Scranton Area Chamber of Commerce**  
PO Box 431  
Scranton, PA 18501  
(570) 342-7711  
[jstetz@scrantonchamber.com](mailto:jstetz@scrantonchamber.com)

### ***Carbondale Chamber of Commerce***

27 N Main St.  
Carbondale, PA 18407  
(570)282-1690  
[info@carbondale-pa-coc.com](mailto:info@carbondale-pa-coc.com)

### ***LUZERNE COUNTY***

**Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry**  
PO Box 5340  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18710-5340  
(570) 823-2101  
[wbcoc@wilkes-barre.org](mailto:wbcoc@wilkes-barre.org)

Pittston Chamber  
Kennedy Blvd. & Williams St.  
PO Box 704  
Pittston, PA 18640  
(570) 655-1424  
[info@pittstonchamber.org](mailto:info@pittstonchamber.org)

## **Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce**

Citiscap  
20 West Broad St.  
Hazleton, PA 18201  
(570) 455-1509  
[dpalermo@hazletonchamber.org](mailto:dpalermo@hazletonchamber.org)

## **WIB's**

### **Lackawanna County Workforce Investment Board**

Virginia Turano, Executive Director  
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Scranton, PA 18503  
(570)342-3649  
[vturano@dli.state.pa.us](mailto:vturano@dli.state.pa.us)

### **Luzerne/Schuykill Counties Work Force Investment Board**

Paul O'Malia, Executive Director  
32 East Union Street  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701  
(570) 822-1101 ext. 217  
[paul.omalia@luzernecounty.org](mailto:paul.omalia@luzernecounty.org)

## **County Government**

### **LACKAWANNA COUNTY**

#### **Lackawanna County Administration Building**

6th floor  
200 Adams Avenue  
Scranton, PA 18503  
(570) 963-6800

### **Board of Commissioners**

A. J. Munchak  
(570) 963-6800  
[Munchakaj@lackawannacounty.org](mailto:Munchakaj@lackawannacounty.org)

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Michael J. Washo  
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### **LUZERNE COUNTY**

#### **Luzerne County Courthouse**

200 North River Street  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711  
(570) 825-1633

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Stephen A. Urban  
(570) 825-1633  
[steve.urban@luzernecounty.org](mailto:steve.urban@luzernecounty.org)

## Local Government

Lackawanna County is comprised of 40 municipalities, with several forms of government. City government is made up of a mayor and council members; borough government also has a mayor and council members, and township government has township supervisors or township commissioners. Information on each individual municipality in Lackawanna County can be obtained by visiting <http://www.lackawanna-county.org/municipalities.aspx?Page=0&Counter=0>.

Luzerne County is comprised of 76 municipalities, also with several different forms of government. City government is made up of a mayor and city council; boroughs have a mayor and council; and townships utilize the commissioner or supervisor form of government. Municipality contact information can be found on Luzerne County's Municipal Cooperation Commission (MCC) website at: [http://www.luzernecounty.org/county/major\\_projects/municipal-cooperation-commission](http://www.luzernecounty.org/county/major_projects/municipal-cooperation-commission).

## DCED

### Northeast Regional Office

Local Government Services  
Oppenhiem Building  
409 Lackawanna Avenue, 3rd Floor  
Scranton, PA 18503-1928  
(570) 963-4166

## Convention & Visitors Bureau

### *LACKAWANNA COUNTY*

#### **Lackawanna County Convention & Visitors Bureau**

99 Glenmaura National Blvd.,  
Scranton, PA 18507  
1-800-22WELCOME  
[info@visitnepa.org](mailto:info@visitnepa.org)

### *LUZERNE COUNTY*

#### **Luzerne County Convention & Visitors Bureau**

56 Public Square  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701  
(570) 819-1877  
[tournepa@tournepa.com](mailto:tournepa@tournepa.com)

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