



A collaboration among Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, Penn State Worthington, the Wright Center, University of Scranton, and Wilkes University



Regional Indicators 2017 How are we doing, NEPA?

On May 11th, over 155 regional leaders gathered at the Mohegan Sun Pocono as The Institute shared research on the issues, challenges and opportunities facing our region. While our region, like any other, faces challenges, *the data shows that both Luzerne and Lackawanna counties are making progress and have significant strengths and valuable assets that can be harnessed to move the region forward.*

Jobs & Economic Development

Success in NEPA:

- Unemployment has improved in recent years and has had modest job growth since 2009.
- Innovation is a key aspect of a strong economy and **STEM jobs have increased.** Nearly 50 patents per year are awarded regionally.
- **Fastest growing industries** are professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management.

Continued on Page 3

On The Prisons Remaining Open....

“Without The Institute’s quick and trusted research, a thousand workers would have had no voice in the fight to keep their jobs and to keep their homes in Northeastern Pennsylvania.”

-Senator John T. Yudichak

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A Special Welcome to Our New Academic Partners!

**Penn State
Worthington
Scranton
&
The Wright
Center**

Welcome to our Newest Academic Partners!

The Institute would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest academic partners. We would like to thank Dr. Linda Thomas and Brian Ebersole from The Wright Center and Dr. Marwan Wafa from Penn State University/Worthington for their support and for sharing our vision of a stronger regional economy and healthier communities.

The Wright Center

The Wright Center joined The Institute in April. They are the largest teaching health center graduate medical education consortium in the United States. The Wright Center has a strong focus on primary and preventative healthcare and has residency and fellowship programs in six states. We are excited to partner with Dr. Linda Thomas and Brian Ebersole, a member of our Health & Healthcare task force who will also now be a valued member of our marketing committee.

Penn State University/Worthington

Penn State/Worthington joined The Institute in May. The 45-acre campus outside of Scranton, has 1,200 students, 30% of which are adult students. The campus offers 10 baccalaureate and 4 associate degrees, with plans to grow programs offered to 15 degrees. We are excited to partner with Chancellor Marwan Wafa who will bring new and valuable insight to our Jobs, Economy and Economic Development task force.

Seeking Fall Student Interns

The Institute is accepting applications for fall and winter 2017 sessions. Students of all majors from our academic partner institutions may qualify for both academic credit and a stipend of up to \$599. For more information or to apply, contact Erin McCormick at 570-408-9850 or mccormick@institutepa.org.

Student Intern Program

The Institute's internship program has hosted over 255 students from collaborating higher education partners to date. Students receive credit, stipend and the opportunity to be published. The interns will participate in essential research, analysis and interpretation of data on a variety of community and business issues with real world application in a professional environment. During the summer, (space permitting) regional resident students from non-participating schools are invited to apply for internships.

Research Associate

Robert Graham, Stetson University, 2016, BS in Business Management

Summer Interns 2017

William Bucher, East Stroudsburg, BA in Political Science

Gaetano Buonsante, Misericordia University, BA in Government, Law and National Security, BA in Psychology

John Cahill, East Stroudsburg University, MA in Political Science

Sabrina Chan, Penn State University, BA in Economics

Timothy Dodds, University of Scranton. BS in Psychology & Philosophy

Thomas Farley, Merrimack College, Girard School of Business, BS in Business Administration

Michael Kavanagh, Gettysburg College, BA in Economics and Public Policy

Caitlin Meehan, Luzerne County Community College, AAS.GCD Commercial Art Graphic Design Specialization and B.A. Communications – Misericordia University

Douglas Ooms, Saint Joseph's University, BS in Marketing

Wyatt Scott, Misericordia University. BA in Government, Law & National Security

Peter Zabiegala, University of Scranton, BS in Economics and International Business

Economic Development

Room for Improvement

- Our unemployment rate, while improving, **remains slightly higher than the statewide rate.**
- Household income has increased but remains below state average.
- Poverty rates in the region are higher than the statewide and national averages; **over 15% of residents live in poverty. The poverty rate among children is 20%.**

Top Industries by Employment:

1. **Education and Health Care**
2. **Retail Trade**
3. **Manufacturing**

Fastest Growing Industries:

1. **Professional, Scientific, and Administrative Services**
2. **Wholesale Trade**
3. **Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities**

Percentage of Residents in Poverty:

Lackawanna County

16%

Luzerne County

15%

Pennsylvania

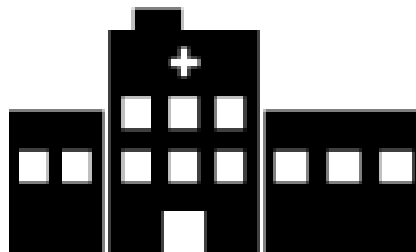
13%

Health & Health Care Progress in NEPA:

- The region has seen **improving trends in cancer and heart disease.**
- Death by heart disease has been declining and reached a new low in 2014.
- **Teen pregnancy rates saw significant improvements in Luzerne (50% drop) and Lackawanna County (22% drop).**
- Rate of residents covered by health insurance has improved gradually from 2010 to 2015.

Room for Improvement:

- **Cancer rates in both counties, while improving, remain about the state average.**
- Though there has been a modest improvement in cigarette smoking and excessive drinking rates, these behaviors are more prevalent in our region than statewide.



Education & Workforce Development

Successes:

- The number of college degree holders in the region has grown, both 2 & 4 year degrees.
- For the five years recorded, both counties had higher four year cohort graduation rates than the state as a whole.
- AP courses offered by the region's high schools increased from last year in both counties.

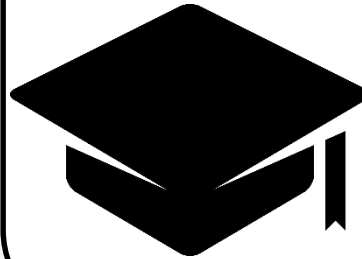
Room for Improvement:

- Four year high school graduation rates have trended downward in both counties over the past several years, however did show an increase in the most recent year measured.
- There is significant variation of academic performance indicators from district to district. **It is important for struggling schools to continue to strive for improvement.**

Higher education institutions in the two counties awarded a total of

8,514

degrees and certificates in 2014-15.



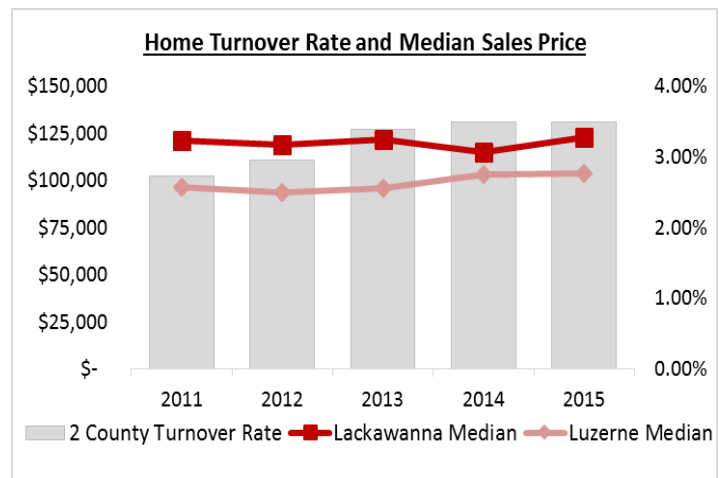
Top fields:

Business (589 degrees)

Nursing (464 degrees)

Housing

- Foreclosures fell in 2015, while the statewide foreclosure rate rose.
- The region's housing stock is generally older and home values below average.
- Home prices have appreciated relatively slowly in the region.



Task Force Research 2017

Each year, task force teams comprised of diverse groups of professionals in respective fields convene and generate strategies, plans and policy solutions based on research to help improve quality of life and standard of living for residents of the region.

Visit www.institutepa.org for the Indicators book and to access this year's task force papers.

Jobs, Economy & Economic Development Task Force

Topic: *The Impact of Regional Financial Literacy on The Economy*

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/finlit2.pdf>

Education & Workforce Development Task Force

Topic: *A Study on Vocational Education and Its Role in STEM Education*

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/cte.pdf>

Energy Task Force

Topic: *Natural Gas Pipeline Infrastructure*

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/pipeline17.pdf>

Topic: *An Examination of Natural Gas & Electricity Costs in NEPA*

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/energycost.pdf>

Health & Healthcare Task Force

Topic: *Oral Health Challenges in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties*

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/oral.pdf>

Housing Task Force

Topic: *Measuring the Impact of Economic Blight in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties*

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/blight.pdf>

Topic: *The Foundation of a Successful Land Bank*

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/landbanks.pdf>

Planning, Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Task Force

Topic: *Regional Public Transit Demand*

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/publictransitdemand.pdf>

Education & Workforce Development and Jobs, Economy and Economic Development Joint Task Force

Topic: *Understanding Unemployment in the Region: A Structural Analysis*

A Huge THANK YOU to our Task Force Chairs!

Jobs, Economy & Economic Development, Robert Luciani, PNC Retirement

Education & Workforce Development, Lucyann Vierling, Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance

Energy, Bill Sordoni, Sordoni Construction

Health & Healthcare, Steven Scheinman, MD, Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine

Housing, Charles Kasko, Wyoming Valley Motors

Planning, Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure, Marleen Troy, Ph.D., Wilkes University

Public Safety, Congressman Lou Barletta and State Senator John T. Yudichak

What is Community Based Research?

Community based research is at the core of The Institute's mission. The Institute was founded on the belief that it is critical to the future of our region to have an organization working to both identify our challenges, issues and opportunities and find innovative solutions to meet these challenges. This research is funded by our academic partners and our generous sponsors.

Indicators Initiative

Each May, The Institute holds an Indicators forum to share data measuring the regions progress on the economic, healthcare, environmental, education and infrastructure measures. Dialogue resulting from past events has been a driving force behind many important economic development and community revitalization projects that have produced positive outcomes for our region and its residents.

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/indicators17.pdf>.

Task Force Research

Diverse groups of professionals in respective fields convene and generate strategies and policy solutions to identify and address the challenges faced by our region. Findings are presented at the Indicators event. The research has been used by leaders and civic entrepreneurs in initiatives to move our region forward.

http://www.institutepa.org/Regional_Indicators.html

Pillars of a Strong Community

In 2016, The Institute previewed the *Pillars of a Strong Community Index*. This index measures and benchmarks the region in an index highlight four pillars of strong communities - economic, health and families, infrastructure and physical assets and community. The 2017 Index highlights depicts the most current data and change from 2016.

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/pillars17web.pdf>

Quarterly Economic Tracker

This free online publication explores the region's economic and business trends as well as the latest economic data. Funded by the Willary Foundation as signature underwriter, UGI Utilities and PNC Foundation, it is an important tool for those who want to be in the know regarding the regional economy.

Spring 2017 Issue

Our most recent issue highlights:

- Female entrepreneurship in the region
- The region's changing retail sector and the challenges faced by the global retail industry
- Pillars of a Strong Community highlights

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/EconomyTracker/qetsp17.pdf>

Polling Program

In 2015, The Institute along with its higher education partners, formed a polling program within the organization. The intent was to poll college students on a variety of topics in order to better understand what our future leaders think is important, their perceptions of the region, and interests in civic engagement.

http://institutepa.org/community_research_polls.html

Cost of Living Index

The Institute participates on a national research team lead by *The Council for Community and Economic Research* to gather quarterly data on various goods and services in the region in order to develop a regional cost of living index. Results are published in the QET.

<http://institutepa.org/Economy%20Tracker.html>

Who We Are:

The Institute is a non-profit research organization dedicated to empowering business and community leaders with research based strategies for informed decision making. We conduct independent, non-biased research to identify the opportunities, issues and challenges unique to the region and find innovative solutions to help solve the problems facing our communities. The Institute also offers a wide array of research, consulting and support services to help organizations boost productivity, increase profitability and be successful in their missions.

Academic Partners

Geisinger Commonwealth
School of Medicine
Keystone College
King's College
Lackawanna College
Luzerne County Community College
Marywood University
Misericordia University
Penn State Wilkes-Barre
Penn State Worthington Scranton
The Wright Center
University of Scranton
Wilkes University

A Sincere Thank You to our Generous 2017 Sponsors

The Institute would like to sincerely thank our generous stakeholders who share our vision for a strong regional economy and healthy communities. Your support makes our work possible!

Signature Underwriters

Andrew J Sordoni Foundation
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PPL Electric Utilities
Sordoni Family Foundation

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Geisinger Health System
Luzerne County Housing Partnership
Mohegan Sun Pocono

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Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
OneSource Staffing
Sanofi Pasteur
Wells Fargo Foundation

Public Media Partner

WVIA Public Media

Thank you to **Vice Chairman Frank Joanlanne**, President Borton Lawson and Precise Visual Technologies for you participation in Indicators 2017!

Research-Based Client Solutions

The Institute provides a full range of customized research, consulting and support services to public and private organizations on a fee-for service basis. As a non-profit and by harnessing the resources of our higher education partners. We are able to offer superior products at very competitive prices. Research-based client solutions include but are not limited to the following:

Market &
Feasibility Studies
Indicators- Indexes
Community Health
Assessments
Housing Studies
Economic
Development
Strategies
Economic and Tax
Impact Studies
Industry Studies
Workforce Studies
Education Studies
Economic and
Demographic
Profiles

Policy Analysis
Grant and Program
Evaluation Support
Research
Validation and Peer
Review
Site Selection
Research
Arts & Culture
Studies
Tourism Strategic
Plans
Comprehensive
Plans
Asset Maps

Client List

Arts & Culture

Lackawanna County Arts & Culture Department
Luzerne County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Luzerne County Cultural Council

Corporate

Borton Lawson
Live Nation
Martz Group
Williams-Transcontinental Pipeline Company, LLC
Ufberg Law

Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport
Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins

Economic Development

Carbon County Chamber & Economic Development Corp
Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc.

Forum for Pennsylvania's Heartland
Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry
Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce

Education & Workforce Development

Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine
Kings College

Lackawanna County Workforce Investment Board
Lehigh Carbon Community College SHINE

Luzerne County Head Start
Luzerne Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board
Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network
The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education Wall Street

West/WIRED/US Dept. of Labor
Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance
Wilkes University

Government

Appalachian Regional Commission
Borough of Factoryville
City of Nanticoke

City of Scranton
Columbia & Montour Counties
Lackawanna County

Local Government Commission
Luzerne County
Luzerne County Municipal Cooperation Commission
Wilkes-Barre City
Wyoming County

Health & Healthcare

Geisinger Health System
Healthy Northeast Pennsylvania Initiative
Volunteers in Medicine Clinic

Non-Profit Organizations

All One Foundation
Arbor Housing & Development
Carbondale YMCA
Central Susquehanna Community Foundation
Commission on Equal Opportunity
Jewish Community Center
Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation
Municipal Cooperation Commission
Nicholson Heritage Association
Pennsylvania Economy League
Pocono Alliance
Primary Care Progress
Scranton Area Foundation
Scranton Cultural Center

United Ways of Monroe & Susquehanna Counties, and of Wyoming Valley

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Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, PA

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Wico van Genderen—Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry
Lucyann Vierling — Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance
Mark Volk — Lackawanna College
John T. Yudichak — Pennsylvania State Senate
Marwan Wafa — Penn State University Worthington Scranton

William B. Sordoni—Emeritus, Founding Member & Officer
Sordoni Construction