



Progress Authority

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

Alice M. Davis, Ph.D. — Guest Speaker

Alice M. Davis, Ph.D., has been the Executive Director of the Susquehanna County Career & Technology Center in Springville, PA 18844 since 1998 and also serves as School Counselor Director for the school. Alice earned her doctorate in Workforce Education and Development at Penn State University. She earned a Supervisor's Certification in Guidance Services, a Master of Science in Secondary Administration, and a Master of Science in Counselor Education from the University of Scranton.

In her role as Executive Director, Dr. Davis orchestrated a building project adding a second building to the SCCTC complex which houses the administrative offices, conference rooms, a Practical Nurse suite, Business and Industry Lab, four new program areas and most recently a Business Development Incubator. She has increased the Adult Program and Certification Programs by leaps and bounds. Under her supervision industry credentials available to the SCCTC high school students has increased 10-fold. Dr. Davis' vision for the career center is enhanced by



her compassion. Any time a program can provide a service for the community, she asks that they do whatever is possible to incorporate it into their curriculum. Her belief stems around the notion that if we are to train a well-rounded employee, we must also instill a need to give back to the community.

Dr. Davis is very active in professional organizations. She has served as both President and Vice President of the Pennsylvania Association of Career & Technical Administrators; President of the Eastern Region of the

Pennsylvania Association of Career & Technical Administrators; Chairperson of the Commercial and Education Exhibits Committee of the Pennsylvania Association for CTE; and President of the Endless Mountains Counselors Association. Dr. Davis is a member of the Association for Career & Technical Education, the Pennsylvania School Counselors Association, the Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, the Northern Tier Industry Education Consortium, the Northern Tier Tech Prep Consortium Advisory Board, and the Keystone College President's Advisory Council as well as a member of the Board of Trustees. She is also a Board Member of Mercy Tyler Home Health Board, the United Way of Susquehanna County, the Susquehanna County Economic Advisory Council, Inc., and the Susquehanna County Community Foundation.

Alice Davis is married to Raymond Davis, Esquire and lives in Meshoppen, Pennsylvania. She is the mother of four grown sons, Charlie, Frank, Marty, and Gavin and seven grandchildren.

Annual Newsletter Sponsored by:



Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation

A Message from the Director

Anthony J. Ventello

I am truly excited about the opportunities that lie before us. Through our ongoing interface with Susquehanna County's businesses and industries indications of continued and planned investment are encouraging. However, two critical issues remain top priorities to address. They are access to trained, reliable workforce and poor connectivity/lack of broadband. These problems are in most cases the primary reason that curtails or slows business growth in the County; thus, investment and job development are moderate at best. We are unable to prioritize one over the other, but the issues of broadband and workforce are closely related to the success of an existing or proposed business project.

Whether it be small business, large manufacturing or agriculture, the mantra is the same.

The 2019 annual breakfast meeting features a great resource that exists in Susquehanna County. This is the Susquehanna County Career and Technical Center, located at Elk Lake School District. Dr. Alice Davis and her dedicated staff have done an outstanding job in preparing our secondary educational youth for the workforce. This is critical to using and retaining our young workforce in the County. The key is continuing to work closely and listen to employers to address and satisfy their needs. I believe Dr. Davis will impress you with her curriculum offerings and success stories. The Progress Authority continues to evaluate ineffective workforce efforts towards a recommendation to key decision making for more focused and impactful use of workforce funding and bolster our



providers who do great work, like Dennis Phelps and his Trehab staff.

With regards to broadband, the Progress Authority continues the emphasis of how poor rural broadband services threaten public safety, access to government, educational services, healthcare, business development, agriculture and activities of daily living. The rural dilemma of too many miles of road and low population density by nature is not conducive to profitable ISP business plan development. We want to build the middle mile to facilitate last mile development. The broadband issue is very detailed regarding our efforts to provide testimony and seek funding in our 2018 annual report, which can be found at www.cbprogress.org.

On other opportunities, great strides have been made regarding value-added natural gas development. By adding value to this precious resource before it leaves Susquehanna County, we maximize

its impact to local investment and jobs. This is happening in improved distribution, LNG/CNG development, energy generation, feed stock for manufacturing and project development. Our railroad system has been subject to investment and planned improvements. Infrastructure development and continued securing of funding is always a high priority.

Continued face to face interviews with businesses is foremost to the strategic action plan for business development and the DCED Engage! Program is very effective in accomplishing that task. The new Pennsylvania Farm bill identifies \$23 million for business plan development and focuses on hemp, hops, hardwood and honey. Specialty crops are a plan to bolster agriculture, because let's face it, Susquehanna County is well positioned with an agricultural community, agricultural support services, proximity to market (the East Coast megalopolis) and of course farmland and critically important water resources. We believe the future is bright for agriculture. And let us not forget that broadband is critical to its success.

Soon we will announce formal office hours in the County. However, it is our intent to be most effective by meeting directly with people and businesses on their own turf.

I thank the County Commissioners, the Susquehanna County Economic Development Advisory Board and our legislators for their support in the continued economic development of Susquehanna County.

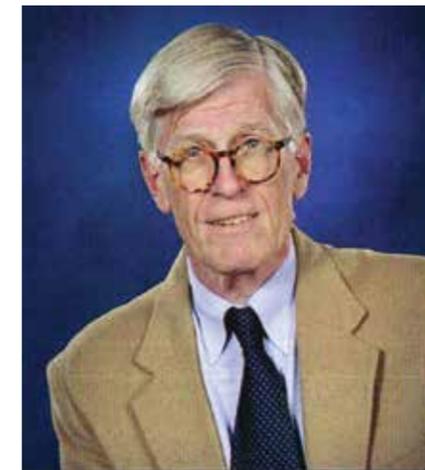
A Message from the President

George Conner

I bid a "Warm Welcome" to both new attendees and veteran participants to our annual breakfast and meeting. Speaking for the Advisory Board, I appreciate that you have taken time from your schedule to check on the state of the economy in Susquehanna County. As you read through this report you will find ample evidence of the strength of our local economy. It would be presumptuous to take credit for this strength, although we would like to think that, at a minimum, we do our best to encourage, applaud, and recognize the movers and shakers that push economic growth in the county. Our annual meeting allows us to connect with a larger group than those who attend our monthly meetings. It is connections ...of many types ...that drive a business and the larger economy forward.

The day to day force leading our effort to connect our county with the world is the Progress Authority under Tony Ventello's leadership, with Chris Brown's and Kim Fairchild's able assistance. These professionals survey, assist, monitor and encourage what is happening here. The Advisory Board, a volunteer group of Susquehanna County business and professional people meets monthly to offer their counsel and guidance. Our meetings are faithfully attended by the Commissioners, county agency representatives with intertwining interests, and the press. The result is an opportunity to connect.

Our goals remain consistent with previous year's ambitions. We are pursuing and making progress on our dark fiber project, the establishment of a network that would allow businesses and residents to connect to the internet through high speed optical fiber. Our Revolving Loan Fund is active and available to new and established businesses to borrow capital at a reasonable rate. The fund is increasingly being utilized but merits increased publicity. The Business Initiative Task Force seeks to publicize our efforts while assisting new and growing businesses. Deriving from the Commissioners "Open For Business" campaign, the task force seeks out growing businesses offering assistance, links with other agencies, and planning for open house celebrations. The task force exemplifies the strength of connections between the private business, the press, and government. The Progress



Authority continues working on projects that add value to our local economy by encouraging the use of natural gas. Tony and Chris also continue to maintain connections to State and Federal office holders, grant programs, and programs that support infrastructure needs.

In trying to put into words the value of and necessity for connections, I came across the website of a consultant group, TomorrowTodayGlobal. They offer a fascinating theory on "competitive advantage" and the history of economic eras. Their blog speeds through a descriptive history of the world, outlining succeeding economic periods starting with the Hunter/Gatherer era, which transformed to the Agrarian era, which was overtaken by the Industrial era, which has morphed into the Information era. Each span giving competitive advantage to certain skills, styles of leadership, and perception of time. Each stage also having been disrupted by technological advances that shifted the economy to a new era and a new way of perceiving leadership styles and competitive advantage. Competitive being defined as using the "rules of the game" to survive and thrive.

I recently spoke with an older gentleman about his life and work experience. When he finished grad school he had interviews at ten major industrial companies and subsequently took a job with a major insurance company. Over forty years, all nine of the other companies, major industrial giants of their time, had vanished! Were they playing by the rules but the game had changed?

The speed at which these eras begin

and end is increasingly being shortened. Our forebears possibly lived their entire life experiencing only one era. The farm on which I live was for the nineteenth century a real farm, with crops and animals and physical labor. The twentieth century saw it become industrialized with a small scale lumber mill. Succeeding generations were more grounded in information and have used the farm for other purposes. Those of us who came of age in the 60's and 70's may well feel the overlap of two or three of these theoretical periods. Change seems to be accelerating and a competitive advantage that allows a business to succeed seems more elusive.

The Information economy is of course a product of computers. The competitive advantage results from who can manipulate information and use the information best. Data drives the business and the business with the most intelligent use of data survives. But the Information economy is already being disrupted by an era that already exists for many, what TodayTomorrow calls the "Connection Economy". The many are probably Gen Xers and Millennials, not Baby Boomers. The shift is caused by a distinct value change that redefines how workers perceive the balance of work and life, career goals, and teamwork to name only a few. TodayTomorrow writes of a changing of the guard or clash between Boomers who are "digital immigrants" and Gen Xers who are "digital natives". In the Connection economy, competitive advantage shifts to the ability to form meaningful connections and relationships. Leadership is authentic. Character ethic is more than a skill set and corporate values take on new meaning. The shift forces us into new ways of thinking about organizational structure, leadership talent, marketing, training and development. Change is constant. The ability to change is fundamental to sustained business success. As the rules of the game shift, so too does what constitutes competitive advantage.

The Progress Authority and the Advisory Board are future directed. The Connection Economy has arrived. We invite you to make connections that will allow your organization the thrive in the future.



Identifying • Demonstrating • Building • Understanding

Engage! is a Pennsylvania state-wide business retention and expansion (BRE) program designed to regularly and proactively interact with targeted companies. The overall goal of Engage! is to retain existing businesses in a community and to help them grow and expand by building solid relationships with business owners or key decision makers and economic development partners and their representatives. Engage! is intended to regularly interact with companies for purposes of:

- Identifying needs and matching resources to help existing businesses and industries address their challenges to become more competitive and successful.
- Demonstrating to local busi-

nesses and industries that the community recognizes and depends on their contributions to the local/state economy.

- Building community capacity to sustain growth and development.
- Understanding and addressing the common themes articulated by PA businesses in order to drive policy and the menu of the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and partner services for long range business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts.

As economic development providers in our region, The Progress Authority has fostered relationships with the many existing businesses and industries through consistent

performance and trust. We have been their allies and advocates for years. The Progress Authority is excited to utilize our existing business relationships in Susquehanna County to achieve the goals of the Engage! Program.

Meetings were held with the following companies during the 2018-2019 Engage! Program:

- Diaz Manufacturing
- RHL Companies
- Endless Mountain Health System
- Barnes Kasson Hospital
- Joe Hunt and Associates
- Bx3 Companies
- Endless Mountain Stone
- Montrose Machine

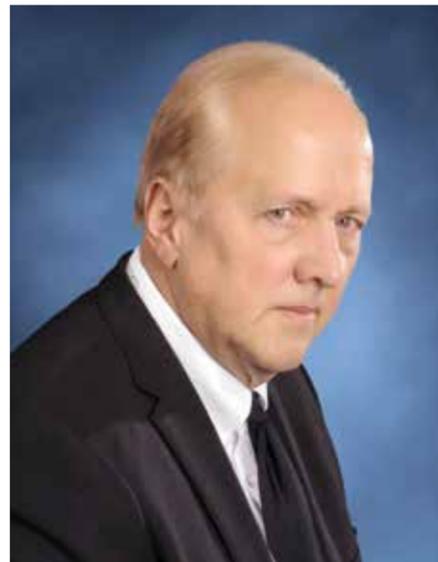
Trehab Workforce Programs

by Dennis Phelps

Trehab is a subcontractor for Workforce Investment Programs, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Programs and Programs that assist individuals on Public Assistance Programs. Programs are funded from PA Department of Labor and Health and Human Services via Northern Tier Planning Commission.

More important than ongoing program provision to residents of Susquehanna County is the importance of Effective Planning forward to assist individuals in need of employment related Programs.

Planning forward for Workforce Programs has traditionally included a strong interorganizational connection with the Progress Authority. The current economy has been in growth setting for 121 months, as detailed



in the Economist, the workforce is aging, GDP growth is lower than previous expansions, and productive growth is slower than anticipated.

Low inflation has indicated a different economic dynamic than previous economic expansions; unemployment rate continues at low rate, lowest in a half century. All indicators are that familiar indicators of recession are not present and the good time will continue for years to come.

Again in conjunction with the Progress Authority, the questions arise, is the current economy a new norm? Or as when the positive economic growth run comes to a halt, how can Workforce Providers like Trehab be ready. As non-profits and government officials review current economic trends, a new historical norm will likely have a decidedly different end.

Revolving Loan Fund

The Progress Authority's Revolving Loan Fund was set up as an economic development tool to assist businesses with their financing needs. The intention of the fund is to strengthen a financing package while taking a subordinate lien position behind a primary lending institution. Special consideration is given to projects that have more job creation. The rate is usually advantageous and the term is dependent on the type of collateral. The Progress Authority is a certified Area Lending Organization (ALO) as an Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and General-Purpose Authority. We have a 20 member board who were appointed by our member municipalities and wear 3 hats representing the 3 separate entities. Our board is the same for the IDC, IDA and General-Purpose Authority.

General Guidelines

- Loan Size: \$25,000 to \$100,000 (Special consideration is given to projects with larger job creation)
- Collateral: Subordinate Lien Position on Real Estate, Equipment, Personal Guaranty is customary.
- Term: Equipment- up to 5 years
Real Estate- up to 10 years
- Rate: Based on collateral and term.

The Loan Committee underwrites each loan request and makes a recommendation to the Executive Committee and Full Board of Directors for a final vote. If the loan is approved, the borrower's legal counsel coordinates closing with the authority's legal counsel when all closing requirements have been met. Loan payments are subsequently made to a local bank that administers the Authority's loan fund. Applications are available online at www.cbprogress.org.

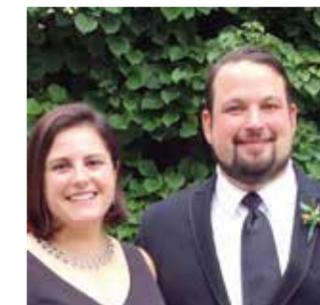
2018 In Review

2018 was an exciting year for the Progress Authority Revolving Loan Fund. \$858,000.00 were lent to private businesses throughout Susquehanna and Bradford Counties. These funds helped leverage over \$1,550,000.00 in private investment while creating 30 jobs and retaining over 97 jobs. The mix of industries that benefited from these loan funds was widely diverse. From Agriculture to Manufacturing, Tourism to Hometown Grocery Stores, the Progress Authority was able to help fund all of these projects.

RLF Recipients: Fiddle Lake Farm



Frugal Living



FRUGAL LIVING

Engaging Small Business

Progress Authority, The University of Scranton Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Corporation (NTRPDC) have been teaming up over the past year to hold Business Walks in the Northern Tier as part of Engage!, a statewide initiative funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development designed to retain existing businesses in a community and to help them grow and expand.

To date, the partners have held 5 walks in Bradford and Susquehanna Counties alone, visiting with over 20 business owners, and listening

to them share their experiences. Each owner brought up opportunities they would like to pursue and/or challenges they would like assistance with overcoming, for which the partners had plenty of ideas to offer. Information was shared about programs and services to further assist and some busi-

nesses have engaged in follow up, receiving assistance ranging from digital marketing plans to regulatory issues, and more.

The partners recently received approval to conduct additional Engage! Business Walks over the next year.



Pictured, L to R: Jenny Marino, Central Bradford County Chamber of Commerce; Gretchen Kukuchka, The University of Scranton Small Business Development Center; Chris Brown, Progress Authority; Lisa Hall Zielinski, The University of Scranton Small Business Development Center; Lauren Egleston, Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission; Jennifer Lench, PA Department of Community & Economic Development; and Joe Sturzen, Jr., Sturzen Furniture, Inc.

Endless Mountains Health Systems IFIP Grant

In November of 2010, the Progress Authority facilitated a grant for Endless Mountains Health for \$977,760 through the Infrastructure and Facilities Improvement Program (IFIP). This program is a multi-year grant program that provides grants to specific issuers of debt to assist with debt service payments. The purpose of funding must be for business site development and the grant cannot exceed the eligible tax increment amount generated by the project.

The grant is for 20 years with \$48,888 drawn down each year. We are on the eighth payment and are reimbursing interest paid to the USDA, with \$391,104 paid to date.



Interning at the Progress Authority

David Boardman

While interning at The Progress Authority, I have had the opportunity to take part in many projects that effect the area I live in. My part may not have been the largest, but it was still exciting to be part of the projects that will help benefit my community. For example, in order to successfully construct the gas-to-liquids facility in Wyalusing, Pa, Black and Veatch had to be sure they could properly house their workers in the area. I, along with a former intern, Robert, were tasked with gathering housing information within a 50-mile radius of the jobsite. While this job came off as insignificant and tedious, if the company did not have this information the project might not have been able to move forward as smoothly as it did. If the project did not move forward, Bradford County could have missed out hundreds of jobs and career opportunities.

My internship at the Progress Authority has also helped me improve upon my soft skills. Between attending meetings with people such as the Bradford County Commissioners, board members, and even

the Governor of Pennsylvania, I now have a better idea of what it is like to act like a professional. Skills such as properly shaking someone's hand and attentively listening were skills I had prior to the internship, but I now understand the importance of them.

Working for the Progress Authority has helped me improve my work ethic dramatically. In high school, assignment deadlines were loose to some degree. In college and in the working world, it is the exact opposite. Having the opportunity to work for a group where a missed deadline for a grant application, for example, could mean missing out on thousands of dollars. I now feel confident with my newly sharpened skills and knowledge in moving forward in my academic career as I work toward my degree.

Lastly, the Central Bradford Progress Authority has allowed me to see behind the scenes of what goes on in my community. I am a firm believer in being active in the community you live in and I could not think of a better place to do that than here. Growing up, I never knew about anything



happening in my area until it happened. When I started at the Progress Authority, it fascinated me seeing what all takes place before a project is completed. I had no idea what it took to start a business, completing a grant application, issue a loan until I became an intern.

Industry Helping End Food Insecurity In N.E. PA

MaryAnn Warren

County Commissioner

With food insecurity affecting almost 11% of the population of Susquehanna County, Cabot Oil & Gas has taken a proactive step in Governor Wolf's, "Setting the Table: a Blueprint for a Hunger-Free Pennsylvania". Cabot recently pledged to donate \$250,000 per year for the next six years to the CEO Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank, that serves Susquehanna, Wyoming, Lackawanna and Luzerne counties, under the Neighborhood Assistance Program. The Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development approves businesses tax credits through a long-term collaboration in producing a comprehensive, asset-based and relationship-driven approach to community development.

Food insecurity is defined as the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious

food. While the statistics are one in six children in Pennsylvania struggles with hunger, the heartbreaking reality is, one in four Susquehanna County children have food insecurity. The number of students receiving reduced or free lunches in our six County schools tops 50% of the school aged population. Statistics show that hungry children do more poorly in school and have lower academic achievement because they are not well prepared for school and cannot concentrate. They also have more social and behavioral problems because they feel bad, have less energy for complex social interactions, and cannot adapt as effectively to environmental stresses.

The Weinberg Regional Food Bank distributes nearly ten million pounds of food annually, provides training and capacity building to Food bank member agencies, operates a community kitchen

that prepares and delivers nutritious meals to community and school based programs during both, the school year and during the summer months and provides nutrition education at area schools, child care centers and Children's Produce Markets and Mobile Food Pantries. The Neighborhood Assistance Program tax credits will be used to leverage additional donations of healthy, nutritious valuable food and grocery products as well as financial contributions to the Regional Food Bank. With businesses such as Cabot Oil & Gas taking advantage of tax credit programs offered through State agencies and crediting their resources into projects that affect the health and well-being of residents, I believe CEO Weinberg will reach their goal to end hunger in Northeast Pennsylvania by 2025.

Cabot's Support of Education

In Pennsylvania, where Cabot's operations are located, the oil and gas industry accounts for more than 320,000 jobs. Cabot supports programs that ensure students have access to the education and training that today's jobs require. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers are vital to our future, especially in the energy industry.

The Energy Education Fund

Due to changing workforce demographics, there will be significant opportunities for younger workers within the energy industry — hundreds of thousands of whom are projected to fill 1.9 million new job opportunities by 2035 as almost 40 percent of the worker base gets ready to retire. After realizing this pressing issue, Cabot created the Energy Education Fund.

The Energy Education Fund is dedicated to providing educational opportunities to students and teachers to grow a future workforce and interest in STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics-related to the energy industry.

As the energy industry continues to transform itself in a time of widespread technological innovation, we need to make sure the next generation of employees has the imagination and skills necessary to thrive in a world of new challenges and opportunities.

The Energy Education fund helps to bring the MOLU, STEM and Teacher Workshops and Knowledge Boxes to schools across Pennsylvania, at no cost to them.

For more information, visit www.energyeducationfund.com

The MOLU

The Mobile Oilfield Learning Unit (MOLU) is a traveling exhibit that teaches students in grades 5-8 about STEM careers related to the energy industry through hands-on, educational activities.

The MOLU has six mobile units comprised of four stations each or a total of 24 educational activities. Students travel around each station spending a few minutes at each while learning, filling out accompanying worksheets and exploring and engaging with the hands-on stations.

Due to its popularity, first, in Texas and Louisiana, Cabot helped fund the creation of a new MOLU that is permanently stationed in the Appalachian Basin and plans to serve schools in Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

STEM & Energy Teacher Workshops

The purpose of the Energy & STEM Teacher Workshops is to enhance the curriculum for children from grades K-12. Our goal is to acquaint teachers and administrators with components needed for education about the energy industry and the integration of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curriculum as they pertain to the regional job market.

Knowledge Boxes

The Knowledge Box is a free traveling classroom exhibit for students in grades 6-12 showcasing the oil and gas industry through interactive technology, hands-on activities, posters, and multimedia presentations. The curriculum in the Knowledge Box is correlated to State and National Standards. After completing a Project E3 Workshop, teachers are eligible to reserve the Knowledge Box for a period up to 30 days for their classroom use.

- The Knowledge Box enables students to:
 - Describe the origin of oil and natural gas
 - Discuss the importance of petroleum in our lives
 - Evaluate the economic and environmental impact/issues of fossil fuels
 - Understand the economic significance of the petroleum industry
 - List everyday objects made from petroleum

Lackawanna College School of Petroleum & Natural Gas

Located in the Marcellus Shale region of Pennsylvania, the Lackawanna College School of Petroleum & Natural Gas (LCPNG) is an ideal partner to support the growth of work-ready local residents for the region's petroleum and natural gas firms. In addition to collaborating on curriculum and supporting lectures, field trips and intern opportunities, Cabot cre-

ated a \$2.5 million endowment for LCPNG scholarships, equipment, curriculum development and long-term needs.

The school offers four associate's degree programs in the field: petroleum and natural gas technology, natural gas compression technology, petroleum and natural gas measurement, and petroleum and natural gas business administration. The curriculum is revised every year to align with what the industry needs at the moment. Learning from the industry perspective gives students a significant career advantage — nearly 100 percent of students who are actively seeking employment after graduation find it in the oil and gas industry — and more than 70 percent of the school's graduates are hired by major oil and gas companies.

"Our partnership with Cabot enhances tremendously the ability of the School of Petroleum & Natural Gas to provide a world-class education designed to prepare a ready workforce that fits the needs of the multiple companies across the industry," said college President Mark Volk. "Beyond just an investment in Lackawanna College, through this collaborative effort, Cabot is making an investment in our students and our community."

Internships

Since the creation of the endowment with LCPNG, Cabot has accepted summer interns from Lackawanna College to gain real-world knowledge of the industry. Interns are paired with field operators who mentor the students and facilitate the hands-on experience that is so valuable to the learning process. This also gives Cabot a unique opportunity to gauge the students who will be graduating from Lackawanna and have a basis to make hiring decisions.

Scholarships

In 2016, a pilot program was established between LCPNG and Susquehanna County Career & Technology Center (SCCTC). This Pipeline Program allowed for 11th and 12th graders to take college-level courses specific to the curriculum of LCPNG and receive college credit while attending school at SCCTC. Cabot covered the costs associated with these courses, such as equipment, materials and

text books used by students and faculty. During the first year, 10 students participated in the program. The program will be expanded to additional career and technology centers in the near future.

Northern Tier Industry & Education Consortium (NTIEC)

Cabot supports the Northern Tier Industry & Education Consortium (NTIEC) in their goal to create a highly skilled workforce in Northeastern Pennsylvania through the integration of school, employment, and training processes.

The NTIEC's vision is to ensure that area industries are maintaining their competitive edge. Credit goes to the workforce which is highly skilled, adaptable to changing needs, and committed to excellence. Employment candidates come with solid basic skills in reading, writing, math, science, and communications. They also understand how to solve problems and make decisions. They take individual initiative, demonstrate high integrity, and work well in teams.

The best and brightest students are gearing toward careers with area employ-

ers. They have a good understanding of career opportunities, are studying hard to compete for the available openings, and employers are making better recruiting decisions.

Because schools and colleges have a good understanding of business' requirements and opportunities, innovative educational systems are available in the area. This results in better prepared, more work-ready prospective employees. Most talented youth from the area are employed in local businesses and no longer feel they have to leave for good careers.



Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation

Rural Pennsylvania's Potential

Congressman Fred Keller

During my first two months in Congress, I have focused on giving voice to the issues that affect families in central and northeastern Pennsylvania that Washington often overlooks.

Two of the top issues in rural Pennsylvania are the need for better access to high-speed broadband internet and supporting policies that attract good-paying jobs.

Expansion of broadband into areas like the 12th Congressional District could be a veritable game changer for things like education, healthcare, and our economy.

Nearly 10 percent of all Americans lack access to high-speed broadband, with the vast majority of those living in rural areas like central and northeastern Pennsylvania.

In a 2017 task force study report commissioned by the Trump Administration, limited access to broadband was noted as the major impediment to rural America's overall prosperity.

The solutions to the problem of broadband expansion into rural Pennsylvania are complex, but boil down to the need to create a more favorable regulatory environment. Rolling back and streamlining regulations will allow broadband companies to expand into underserved markets without government getting in the way.

Let me be clear: While rural Pennsylvania—including many portions of the

12th Congressional District—need greater access to broadband, we cannot regulate or tax our way into broadband connectivity.

My 25 years of experience in private industry proved that less government regulation allows businesses to grow, create jobs, and stimulate the economy.

The pro-growth policies advanced by Republicans in Congress and President Donald Trump have made clear that American businesses and workers do better when people can spend more of their hard-earned dollars, when government gets out of the way and reduces needless regulations, and when business owners are not stifled by taxes that take away from re-investment in their workforce.

Over the last two-and-a-half years, thanks to Republicans prioritizing a pro-growth agenda, unemployment has been at record low levels, consumer confidence has risen, more businesses have opened, and the American dream has been restored to more Americans than at any point in our history.

But more work can be done, especially to help rural populations. In addition to expanding broadband access, supporting Pennsylvania's booming natural gas industry will help create prosperity for the towns and communities in central and northeast Pennsylvania.

In Pennsylvania, the natural gas indus-

try supports more than 300,000 jobs, contributes \$45 billion to the commonwealth's economy, and saves the average household \$1,100 every year in energy costs.

As a state lawmaker, I fought to support Pennsylvania's natural gas economy and the thousands of jobs it creates, despite the continued threat of state-level taxes and an onerous regulatory environment.

Leadership in Congress recently appointed me to serve on the House Energy Action Team, where we have made it a priority to promote energy policies that address rising energy costs, promote good-paying jobs, and enhance national security by supporting American energy independence.

I look forward to ensuring that the federal government works with natural gas and other energy stakeholders to support our home-grown energy industry and brings continued prosperity to our region.

The potential of rural Pennsylvania is only limited by the extent to which those in government do not want to engage in the hard work of finding the right solutions. I will not shirk from my responsibility to be a voice for the people of central and northeastern Pennsylvania and ensure our economic future—and the family sustainability that goes with it—remains bright.

Grant Funding Benefits Susquehanna County

by Bobbi Jo Turner

Susquehanna County Housing/Redevelopment Authority

Susquehanna County has been busy administering Grant Programs around the County. Each year the County receives Community Development Block Grant Funding. The Susquehanna County Housing/Redevelopment Authority administers this funding on behalf of the County Commissioners.

Over the past five years, over \$1.2 million has been brought back in to the County through CDBG funding. Recent CDBG projects include Sidewalk improvement projects along Main Street and Jackson Streets in Thompson Borough, Paving of streets in the Borough of Susquehanna, a very successful Adult Education program administered by the Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center(SCCTC), and housing rehabilitation.

The Housing Rehabilitation program assists low income homeowners with much needed repairs to keep the home safe and up to code. Rehabilitation includes items such as new furnaces, siding, windows, electrical upgrades, among other improvements needed. In addition to these projects, some

upcoming projects include demolition of blighted structures, storm drainage improvements, Continuation of the Adult Education, and housing rehabilitation programs.

Please contact the Susquehanna County Housing/Redevelopment Authority for more information on any of these programs.

The County has also been very lucky to receive PHARE Funding. PHARE stands for PA Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancements funding. This funding comes from Marcus Shale Impact Fees. Act 13 of 2012, specifically allocates certain amounts from the impact fee into the PHARE Fund to address the need for affordable housing in the counties, where producing non-conventional gas wells are located. The County has received nearly \$4.5 million of PHARE funds

since the program started in 2012. This year the County was awarded \$874,000.

The Trehab Center will be utilizing a portion of the funding for Rental and Utility Assistance. The Susquehanna County Housing/Redevelopment Authority will be using a portion of the funding for demolition of the old Hallstead School. This will make way for Phase 1 of additional affordable housing units in Hallstead. The Housing Authority plans to complete site work after demolition and construct one duplex at the site, consisting of 2 small ranch style homes with a garage for those over age 55.

The Authority is hopeful it will be able to construct 2 additional buildings for a total of 6 units at the site in later phases when funding is available.

The Authority was successful in removing blighted and unsafe factories in New Milford Borough and Forest City Borough recently to make way for this very popular style of affordable housing on those sites while revitalizing our neighborhoods.

In addition Penn-Dot Transportation Alternatives Funding of \$767,000 has been secured for streetscape projects in Lanesboro Borough and Montrose Borough and those projects will be commencing soon.



Can Hemp Provide Opportunity in Susquehanna County?

The 2018 Farm Bill legalized the production of hemp in this country and producers nationwide including many in Pennsylvania have interest in this 'new' cash crop. In fact, hemp has a long history with human civilization as an industrial fiber stock, largely in the production of durable textiles and rope. Oil was also pressed from the seeds and used as a component of paints, inks, and lamp oil among other products. Hemp arrived in North America in the early 1600s and was a significant agricultural commodity throughout Pennsylvania during most of the 1700s and 1800s. The introduction of fine cotton as a fiber crop ultimately led to a decline in hemp production across the country. When the proliferation of higher Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-containing "marijuana" hemp types and associated social concerns emerged in the 1930s, industrial genotype hems became linked with their psychoactive cousins, and then all were outlawed at the state and federal level.

With changing legal status regarding the crop and renewed interest by producers, economic opportunity may develop for some local growers. Hemp can be grown for seed/oil, fiber, or cannabidiols (CBDs) extracted from the plant tissue. Industrial hemp is commonly grown specifically for a single end-product use (not unlike a specific tomato cultivar being grown for processing, rather than fresh eating). Hemp genotypes highly productive as a fiber source aren't necessarily the optimum genotype for CBD or oil production. Some dual-purpose genotypes provide for fiber and seed/oil but current cultivars are not likely to excel for either end-product. Labor and production requirements vary widely between end-product produc-



Hemp fields like this may find their way back, in the future, to Susquehanna County. (courtesy Dr. Alyssa Collins, PSU)

tion streams. Growers need to decide which production stream they wish to explore, research the market, and then develop a cultural plan that accounts for the equipment and resources needed to raise the crop profitably.

Hemp market development will take some time and may evolve uniquely for each hemp production stream. Whereas a corn grain crop can be harvested and delivered and sold to any number of mills in a reasonable transport distance, harvesting a hemp product and expecting the same opportunity to sell the crop at multiple locations will require the development of industry infrastructure. Competitive pricing will follow market development and industry infrastructure development. Some local producers have been approached by hemp integrators seeking to source CBD oils. In this scenario, the integrator enters into a contract with the producer; the contract spells out technical, cultural, and perhaps financial support for the producer to raise the crop. This arrangement ensures some level of income for the producer if yield goals and production

parameters are met and guarantees the integrator a known source and quality of raw material. CBD cultivars vary in their traits and an integrator will often provide the specific seed to be planted.

Penn State Extension has been researching hemp since 2014, when the legal status of the crop enabled regulated cultivation under supervision of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. We are actively conducting research at our Southeast Agricultural Research & Extension Center in Landisville PA under the directions of Dr. Alyssa Collins. Dr. Collins and her team are conducting research that answers the questions producers and the industry are asking. An internet visit to Penn State Extension's website (<https://extension.psu.edu/industrial-hemp-production>) will provide educational resources for producers and others interested in the commodity. We are also currently hosting regional educational workshops for producers to discuss the permitting process, legislation governing production, variety selection, cultural practices, and market value for the products.

Loans Approved/Closed:

Zazerra's Market	\$	50,000	Closed
Endless Mountains Vet Center	\$	100,000	Closed
2 Dogz and a Guy	\$	30,000	Closed
Diaz	\$	333,000	Closed
BX3	\$	300,000	Closed
Party Plus	\$	150,000	Closed
Rock Ridge Competitive Grant	\$	200,000	Closed
Tim Carpenter State Farm Insurance	\$	22,000	Closed
	\$	<u>1,185,000</u>	

Endless Mountains Health System:

IFIP Grant	\$	1,026,648	Closed/Drawdown every year
HRSA Grant	\$	292,500	Closed
	\$	<u>1,319,148</u>	

Programs/Special Studies:

Enterprise Zone Designation			
Bradford/Susquehanna Joint RLF	\$	4,000,000	Available in both counties
Susquehanna County Housing Study	\$	40,000	Closed
	\$	<u>4,040,000</u>	

Vision 2000 Park:

Act 13 Grant	\$	50,000	Closed
ARC/USDA	\$	200,000	Closed
	\$	<u>250,000</u>	

Small Water and Sewer Grants:

Harford	\$	387,000	Closed
Bridgewater	\$	300,000	Approved
New Milford	\$	251,723	Approved
Hallstead/Great Bend	\$	209,397	Approved
	\$	<u>1,148,120</u>	

ARC Grant Application:

Broadband Feasibility	\$	100,000	Approved
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RCAP:

Public Safety and Continuation of Government Building	\$	500,000	Approved
Endless Mountains Hospital	\$	3,900,000	Closed
	\$	<u>4,400,000</u>	

Route 29 Water/Gas Project:

PA First Grant	\$	446,000	Closed
PA American Water	\$	480,000	Closed
Gas Extension Grant	\$	500,000	Closed
	\$	<u>1,426,000</u>	

Grand total \$ 13,868,268

PARTNERING BOARDS:

Susquehanna County Commissioners • Susquehanna County Planning • PREP
Forest City IDA • Susquehanna County Rail Authority • Montrose IDA
Montrose Chamber • Trehab • Penn State Cooperative Extension
Susquehanna County Farm Bureau • Susquehanna County Career and Tech Center

