

2012 PLAN OF ACTION

“Prepared to Prosper”



Mission Statement

To preserve, protect and defend the free enterprise system through promoting a good business climate and quality of life of the businesses and people of Lycoming County.

Vision Statement

To be a region of superior economic prosperity while sustaining our excellent quality of life.

Values Statement

The Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce is committed to excellent service, integrity, diversity and equal opportunity for all.

**WILLIAMSPORT/LYCOMING CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
2012 PLAN OF ACTION**

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WILLIAMSPORT/LYCOMING CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2012 PLAN OF ACTION

I. INTRODUCTION

The Introduction of the 2011 Plan of Action spoke about the positive economic impact Lycoming County was experiencing as a result of the Marcellus Shale Natural Gas Play and how the Chamber was confident that we could expand our local economy and provide much needed family sustaining jobs while maintaining and protecting our natural environment. We believe we have been successful in that effort. However, we still have much work to do if we are to take full advantage of this opportunity and continue to support responsible environmental protection.

During the course of 2012, we will continue to reach out to our members and keep them engaged and informed. At the close of 2011, we launched a new quarterly program "Morning Member Connection" designed to keep our members informed about the Chamber's activities and updated on key issues facing the community. We will continue those efforts during 2012.

Our member outreach will also be strengthened with our two local chambers, the Montoursville Chamber and the Jersey Shore Area Chamber, with a stronger presence from staff and volunteers at their meetings and events.

The Chamber is proud of the work it accomplishes as the designated Tourism and Visitors Promotion Agency in Lycoming County and through the efforts of the Visitors Bureau, the Chamber will continue to improve the visitors' (both business and tourist) experience when they come to Lycoming County. We take our charge in this area seriously and our support of visitors' attractions will continue to grow and bring positive results throughout the county.

Our Economic Development efforts have obviously changed over the past several years with the emergence of natural gas as an economic driver and we have been in the forefront of the effort both locally through our joint sponsorship of the Lycoming County Community Gas Exploration Task Force and the work of the Chamber's Business Energy Roundtable. It is no coincidence that this Chamber was the only local chamber to have a representative on Governor Corbett's statewide Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission and Lycoming County was the only county to have a Commissioner named as a member as well. This work will continue throughout 2012 and new initiatives will take place.

As important as it is, the gas play is not the only important part of our local economy and the 2012 Plan of Action set forth here is designed to reach all segments of the local economy and work with all businesses that contribute to it. We are proud of our legacy companies and the economic activity and jobs they provide our region.

As you review the Plan, you will see that this organization is truly a one-stop center for economic growth and prosperity. Our four divisions are all charged with programs that first and foremost promote sound economic growth and job creation as well as programs and activities that not only promote Williamsport and all of Lycoming County but also celebrate all that is good with it.

The Chamber enjoys excellent working relationships with the County, City and our local governments throughout Pennsylvania and we pledge to continue to work with them and our elected and appointed government officials in Harrisburg and Washington and welcome their input and cooperation.

The Chamber is entering its 127th year of service and like all organizations it is always healthy to look at how we are structured and financed to accomplish the tasks we do. In 2012 the Board will take a look at our governance structure and practices to ascertain what improvements if any are needed to provide our members with the best possible organization to meet their needs.

2012 will bring its own set of opportunities and challenges and we believe the Chamber and its affiliated organizations will be up to the task of taking advantage of the opportunities placed before us and successfully meeting the challenges. We urge you to work alongside us as we continue to strive for a stronger business climate and community. We stand...

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II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. MARKETING, LAND AND BUILDINGS

Purpose: Ensure that a sound private sector driven, countywide economic development effort that works towards providing an economic climate conducive to promoting growth and expansion of business and industry throughout Lycoming County is in place.

Action Items:

New...In partnership with IPC, develop and implement long-term funding strategy for economic development efforts.

New...Develop a comprehensive economic and community development marketing plan for Lycoming County through the Marketing and Communications Committee.

New...Implement new PREP program in response to DCED regional economic development guidelines.

New...Investigate utilizing the Marcellus Shale gas produced here to benefit our existing manufacturing base.

...Continue to source opportunities to grow traditional market industries while also tracking and pursuing new industrial development opportunities.

...Conduct at least one Marcellus Career Expo and a separate general industry job fair in partnership with Pennsylvania College of Technology, Marcellus Shale Education & Training Center and CareerLink.

...Continue and expand the work associated with the Business Energy Roundtable.

...Market and administer the Small Business Revolving Loan Program for Williamsport and Lycoming County businesses.

...Partner and assist the County in providing the needed infrastructure in the County Comprehensive Plan's growth corridors and where feasibility studies have already been conducted.

...Work with our partners and our State elected officials to gain reauthorization of funds for Business Financing Programs.

...Actively promote state/local funding opportunities within Lycoming County.

...Enhance existing and where necessary develop new relationships with local, regional and state officials (elected and appointed).

...Participate in proactive business visits with the State and other interested partners to site consultants, developers and expanding companies.

B. TRANSPORTATION

Purpose: Assure that Lycoming County shall be served by a safe, modern and efficient intermodal transportation system to facilitate economic development and to preserve economic viability. Support initiatives that provide adequate federal and state funding levels necessary to achieve a modern well-planned intermodal transportation system.

Action Items:

...Continue to work aggressively with Lycoming County and the Airport Authority to ensure a comprehensive plan to market the Williamsport Regional Airport is in place that sets out a strategy that will improve airport usage for business and leisure travelers.

...Partner with the Williamsport Regional Airport Authority in pursuing infrastructure priority projects identified by the Airport Authority as part of the Airport Master Plan and continue to implement Air Service Action Plan recommendations.

...Continue our partnership with the Williamsport Regional Airport Authority to preserve the current availability of air services and expand air services as needed to support business and leisure travel demand.

...Support full funding and expedited completion of the CSVT project as a high regional priority.

...Support a reasonable and equitable state transportation revenue system to ensure adequate state match is provided to secure federal funding and to ensure proper system maintenance and improvements through the recommendations of the Governor's Transportation Advisory Commission.

...Coordinate, support and actively participate with the Route 15 Coalition and ATA on Route 15.

...Support comprehensive planning that links land use and transportation planning and provides the necessary infrastructure with intermodal connectivity (as appropriate) to support economic development within designated growth areas.

...Support ongoing State efforts to design and construct a flood protection dike system for Montoursville and integrate with Airport Access/RR Bridge project.

...Review and provide input to the Lycoming County Planning Commission on highway access control planning efforts in growth areas.

...Continue to monitor Lycoming Valley Railroad service to ensure industry needs are being met and work closely with the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority to explore potential economic development opportunities associated with provisions of this service.

C. EDUCATION

Purpose: To participate in the educational delivery system in Lycoming County as it relates to the economic vitality of the area.

Action Items:

...Actively support school district initiatives and legislative actions to reduce cyber-charter education costs. This initiative is designed to make the public aware of the impacts and effects cyber-charter schools have on students.

...Actively work toward the integration of business and education to meet current and future workforce development needs in Lycoming County by supporting School Counts! through the organization and efforts of a committee focused on jump starting the program:

- School Counts!
 - School Counts! is an active voluntary high school program in which students have the opportunity to acquire the habits they will need to succeed in the workplace. School Counts!, along with the business and educational communities, have united to support the implementation of higher school standards and increased student accountability. Students are able to earn up to five credentials through their high school career. Upon earning the credentials, the students will be eligible for a School Counts! certificate. This certificate can be presented to employers when applying for an entry-level job.

...Continue to actively support higher levels of achievement initiatives in K-12 grades to enable all students to reach proficiency. This initiative is designed to infuse rigor/relevance into the curriculum, reduce high school dropouts, build positive school/student relationships and improve college and career guidance.

...Create and deliver monthly information on current local education issues and events via the *Chamber Connection*.

...Continue to actively participate in the Performance Standards in Education initiative including the continued development and delivery of public relations / marketing.

...Continue to advance and encourage the preparation of all students for careers through the promotion and support of career awareness activities.

...Continue to support and contribute newspaper articles to the *Williamsport Sun-Gazette* and *Chamber Connection* to showcase best practices and positive successes in our schools; and Newspaper In Education (NIE), a campaign through the *Williamsport Sun-Gazette* that supplies newspapers for classroom use to reinforce skills, enhance curriculum and overall student enrichment.

...Conduct an event to promote and recognize the relationship of the education and business communities that presents the following:

- Student Recognition Awards
- Outstanding Educator Awards
- Business Partnership Award
- Alumni of the Year Award

...Hold "Welcome Receptions" for new school district superintendents.

D. LYCOMING COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

Purpose: The mission of the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau is to promote and increase tourism and business visits to Lycoming County and surrounding areas.

Action Items:

...Establish the following subcommittees with designated charges:

Marketing

- Development of marketing plan based upon redefined target market
- Evaluate current branding and destination identity
- Implement comprehensive print and online map strategy

- Expand and enhance current e-marketing efforts
- Evaluate on case-by-case basis regional marketing efforts
- Continuously evaluate website and social media efforts

Fair/Festival/Event

- Consolidate and coordinate where possible the marketing of local events
- Evaluate and determine need and viability in establishing new events
- Coordinate and supplement where necessary existing resources with other events
- Develop an event marketing tool kit

Destination Development

- Determine role in proposed conference center
- Develop and implement a plan to grow new travel destination product in the county
- Assist City of Williamsport with their efforts to obtain local community ownership of Susquehanna State Park

Government Affairs

- Track legislation at the local, state and federal level as it relates to the travel and tourism industry
- Provide recommendations on legislative positions affecting the travel and tourism industry to the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

Finance/Bylaws

- Propose annual budget guidelines to the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Review and propose Travel and Tourism Grant awards to the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

...Develop a countywide partnership for marketing purposes of all visitor-ready historical hub attractions in Lycoming County to include assets such as Millionaires' Row National Historic District and the Muncy Historic District.

...Partner with and provide the appropriate support to the Williamsport Regional Airport in improving air service for the business and leisure travel industry.

...Provide the necessary assistance to the Jersey Shore Borough and the communities in the Pine Creek Valley as they source the opportunities available to them as potential trail towns.

...Maintain our partnership with the Bald Eagle Art League and continue our joint participation in the First Fridays activities.

...Continue to grow the Grand Slam Parade into a premier annual self-sustaining event through providing volunteer leadership, coordination and staffing.

...Establish programs that support tourism as a significant and growing industry in our county and region through development of niche brochures and providing familiarization (FAM) tours for tour operators, writers, VIC staff and local tourism industry representatives.

...Coordinate and maintain a master tourism events calendar for Lycoming County.

...Review the Travel and Tourism Grants program in advance of the 2013 grant cycle to ensure it is structured to meet the current needs of the nonprofit tourism market in Lycoming County.

III. COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

A. JERSEY SHORE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Purpose: To promote the business community in the Jersey Shore area and assist in promoting the goals and objectives of the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce.

Action Items:

New...Explore opportunities to become more involved with the Jersey Shore Town Meeting activities.

New...Develop and implement a marketing strategy to engage more current Jersey Shore Area Chamber members in meetings and events.

New...Review the guidelines and application process for the Future Business Leaders of America scholarship program with the Jersey Shore Area School District to maximize student participation.

New...Consider hosting a Meet & Greet between current and new Jersey Shore Area Chamber members and gas industry representatives to maximize a member's opportunities to work with new companies, residents and visitors to the area.

New...Explore the possibility of rotating the Jersey Shore Area Chamber General Membership meetings to member businesses, which would expose members to local businesses/peers.

...Continue the partnership with the Jersey Shore Borough on developing and growing the Youth Triathlon. 2011 was the first year of partnership for such an event.

...Continue to explore the idea of creating a Welcome to Jersey Shore sign to be placed at entrance to Jersey Shore. The sign would be sponsored by Chamber members.

...Purchase an advertising square at the Visitors Information Center in Williamsport to promote Jersey Shore businesses and events.

...Continue with new member recruitment, including bringing at least five new Jersey Shore area businesses to the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce.

B. MONTOURSVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Purpose: To promote the business community in the Montoursville area and assist in promoting the goals and objectives of the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce.

Action Items:

New...Work with Montoursville Area School District to establish scholarship opportunity for local students.

...Conduct a winter social event to provide a networking opportunity for Montoursville area businesses.

...Expand our newly formed partnership with the organizers of Olde Tyme Christmas to assist in conducting this annual event in Montoursville.

...Continue efforts to increase community visibility within the borough to attract and retain Montoursville Chamber members.

...Educate our members to the benefits of our affiliation with the Williamsport/ Lycoming Chamber of Commerce.

...Look at options to enhance the Montoursville business community utilizing the reserve funds of the organization.

...Work with the Main Street program on behalf of the business community.

...Continue to work with the D.A.R.E Fair coordinators.

...Continue to host Summer Picnic to enhance and showcase Montoursville businesses to the community.

...Support and assist Fall Festival committee in planning and organization of annual event.

...Continue to hold rotating meeting at Montoursville Chamber businesses with a business tour and guest speaker at the evening meetings.

C. LEADERSHIP LYCOMING

Purpose: To understand the needs of the communities it serves, then educate and motivate potential leaders to commit themselves to address those needs through a variety of community leadership roles.

Action Items:

New...Coordinate and plan events for the 25th Anniversary Celebration in 2012.

New...Schedule a follow-up planning retreat to review the outcomes of the 2011-12 action plans and to transition into the next class year.

New...Develop a comprehensive communications plan to market the program and spread our message outside the usual Chamber network, including but not limited to, identifying and scheduling networking and speaking opportunities and the development of materials to leave with groups and organizations.

New...Explore the feasibility of adding an additional large fundraiser in 2012-13.

New...Institute a sponsored class award for best project.

New...Develop public awareness materials to highlight success of the participants' projects.

New...Analyze reserve fund to ensure investments meet Leadership Lycoming goals.

New...Review existing operations and develop new program management tools such as basic guidelines for awarding scholarships, an application for new Board member nominations to ensure a balanced representation of constituencies, review all Executive Committee position descriptions and develop an investment policy to assist in the Chamber Finance Department.

...Conduct survey of incoming class to evaluate the background and goals of the class and adjust curriculum as appropriate.

...Provide additional information and resources to class members regarding volunteer opportunities.

...Brand class projects.

- ...Determine feasibility of offering automatic payments of pledges to the annual campaign.
- ...Conduct the Alumni Phone-a-Thon as follow up to Annual Alumni Direct Mail Campaign.
- ...Solicit businesses to serve as program day sponsors.
- ...Develop a process and timeline to acquire support from businesses before the start of the program year.
- ...Develop improved process and timeline for recruiting new class members.
- ...Conduct the Final 3 Fundraiser and have the Chair serve on Executive Committee and establish goal.

D. COMMUNITY PRIDE

Purpose: To promote pride in Lycoming County, its businesses, its heritage and its people.

Action Items:

New...Establish a committee/working group that will develop an awards program that will honor excellence in construction and renovations of commercial and industrial buildings throughout Lycoming County.

...Instill pride in our colleges and community by positioning ourselves as a “college town” through cooperative programs that brings together the thousands of students attending our local colleges with the community and encourage participation by college students in events such as the Grand Slam and Holiday Parades.

...Promote participation of the colleges in events such as the Grand Slam Parade and the Downtown Holiday Parade to build awareness of our colleges and to provide networking opportunities for students and business leaders.

...In partnership with the Williamsport Sun-Gazette, continue a monthly College Town newspaper column.

E. WILLIAMSPORT/LYCOMING YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Purpose: To provide young professionals with opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals through social, professional/personal development and community service events.

Action Items:

New...Cosponsor an event with another like-minded civic organization.

New...Launch membership card in order to foster positive relationships with young professionals and community businesses.

New...Rebrand organizational image.

...Continue to develop 2012 calendar of events to include:

- One networking/social event per quarter
- One PM Exchange per quarter
- One professional development per quarter
- One business tour per quarter
- Two community services per year

- One personal enrichment per quarter
- One fundraiser per year
- Two membership meetings per year (town hall meeting and annual meeting)

...Continue to expand the development of the WLYP brand in the business community.

...Continue to grow the list of member benefits.

...Continue to build the paid member base.

...Continue to recruit and train the next wave of future leadership for WLYP.

IV. MEMBERSHIP AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

A. MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION

Purpose: Position the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce as the region's leading economic development agency and business advocate; enabling the Chamber to increase membership through services, benefits and educational programs.

Action Items:

New...Recruit two new member business representatives to actively participate on the Membership Development & Retention Committee.

New...Select PM Exchange hosts for 2013 Calendar Year and present selections to Chamber President by end of October 2012.

New...Evaluate the need for a Membership Drive in 2012. Committee members will be required to actively participate in Membership Drive functions and recruitment of volunteers.

Ongoing:

...Via staff representative, make an announcement on the Ken Sawyer Show twice per month recognizing new members.

...Evaluate the need to put the Membership Information Packet on CD for distribution to new members.

...Establish a subcommittee to evaluate feedback from retention calls. Subcommittee reports all information to Chamber to take appropriate action(s) where necessary.

...The committee will conduct 12 monthly meetings per year. Meetings will be held the last Tuesday of the month. Committee members are required to attend 9 of the 12 meetings.

...Work together with committee members on cold calls to potential new members.

...Create a recognition sign listing new members at Chamber events.

...The committee will distribute new member packets to all new members and follow up in the new member's second month with two Free PM Exchange Certificates. A six month retention follow-up call will be made by committee volunteers or the Development & Retention Coordinator using a provided script and form. The retention form will be evaluated on a quarterly basis to determine if updates need to be applied.

...Send out a thank you note within one week of receiving the new member's application.

...The committee will conduct New Member Orientations in conjunction with the Morning Member Connections.

...Committee Chair, Co-Chairs will present each PM Exchange host with a Certificate of Appreciation.

...Schedule and support PM Exchanges by providing two committee volunteers to work at each Exchange greeting new and existing members, and distributing nametags. Attending committee members may be called upon to facilitate in networking with new members.

...Provide committee volunteers to attend ribbon cuttings and grand opening events on behalf of the organization.

...Develop new and innovative ways to promote our Member Benefits.

...Review benefits on a periodic basis to ensure that they are meeting the membership needs.

...Offer, and where appropriate, partner in offering business seminars and programming to the membership.

B. SPECIAL EVENTS

Purpose: To offer our members quality programs designed to allow for networking opportunities and to provide an enjoyable event in a relaxed setting.

Action Items:

...Conduct the annual Polar Express and Great Pumpkin Express Excursions.

...Coordinate scheduling of the PM Exchanges.

...Conduct the Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet.

...Sponsor the annual Chamber Links Golf Outing.

...Conduct the annual Little League Kick-off Breakfast.

...Hold the Fourth Annual Denim & Diamonds Dance in February.

...Sponsor the annual Education Celebration.

...With the Membership Development and Retention Committee, hold quarterly Morning Member Connection Breakfasts.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Purpose: To provide an effective and efficient system of business management that results in well-planned and presented programs and activities as well as financial stability.

Action Items:

New... Establish a Special Task Force of the Board to conduct a review of the organization's governance structure including our Board and Committee structure, Chamber bylaws, other governing documents for all segments of the organization as well as all appropriate relationships and make recommendation(s) to the Board on any changes and updates deemed necessary.

- ...Continue to evaluate our office and workspace needs as it relates to our changing organization.
- ...Conduct an analysis of our current dues structure and make recommendations on changes.
- ...Review staff assignments to maximize our efforts.
- ...Continue to institute new management control practices resulting in effective day-to-day operations.