

2017 PLAN OF ACTION

“Working to Make Our Community Stronger”



Mission Statement

To preserve, protect and defend the free enterprise system through promoting a good business climate and quality of life for 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 2017 PLAN OF ACTION

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WILLIAMSPORT/LYCOMING CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2017 PLAN OF ACTION

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2016 our charge for the year was “Creating Jobs and Building our Future” and we worked hard at doing that. While we spent our first full year in our new offices, our work and purpose did not change. We worked with local industry to improve the local economic climate amidst a stagnant national economy. We also spent a great deal of time and effort attempting to make sure our workforce is prepared to make the transition to the skills required by today’s jobs. Toward that end, one of our more successful projects is our tours of local industries that our Education Committee conducts for our region’s school Superintendents and for School Counselors. These tours allow for our industries to impress upon our educators the type of skills needed if someone wants to work in one of our many manufacturing facilities. By keeping our Superintendents up to date, they can then bring that information back to our School Board Directors and educators for discussions on how to include these skills in school curriculum. By keeping our School Counselors informed, they in turn can relay that information to our students when students investigate career possibilities.

We also worked with Penn College and others for our annual Science Festival where our region’s fifth graders learned more about STEM studies and the possibilities it afforded them. And in the evening, when it was opened to the public, thousands more learned what the present and future hold.

While the national economy was not conducive to growth, we did have some encouraging news. First, our client visits picked up over the past several years with real interest shown by some manufacturing firms. Over the course of the past six to eight years it was rare to get leads on new manufacturing clients outside of the gas industry. While it was not a “rush” of potential new locations, it was encouraging nonetheless.

On another front, a slow pick up in the natural gas industry was evident beginning in the end of the second quarter and moving forward. Rigs were slowly returning to the region and with them, some activity we had not seen in a couple of years. It is our belief that as pipelines are constructed and the price of natural gas returns to more normal levels, we will also see a more substantial improvement in the natural gas industry in our region as well.

The Montoursville Chamber continues to make an impact in their community working with a number of groups to promote different projects in and around their town including a renovation project of the Broad Street Mini-Park with new bricks dedicated.

The Economic and Community Growth Corporation is steadily moving forward on setting the stage for new economic development initiatives as well as exciting new community development programs. One such program that our volunteers worked on all year is The Emerson Project – a senior level one-on-one mentoring project designed to promote new leadership at the highest level.

Leadership Lycoming continued to transform and modernize its program with a revised advisor program and made changes to virtually every program day agenda. They held a successful Harvest Jamboree and Final 3 as well.

The Lycoming County Visitors Bureau had a successful year at the new Visitors Information Center located at the Chamber offices at 102 West Fourth Street in downtown Williamsport and it is the envy of many similar organizations throughout Pennsylvania. The Visitors Bureau

continued its successful and much needed grant program awarding \$101,568 to local organizations to market their tourism-related programs bringing the total dollars awarded since the inception of this volunteer program to \$1,209,408.

The opening of Trade & Transit II on Third Street also saw the unveiling of the shortstop statue in our Bases Loaded Project. Now, we will turn our attention to the outfield. Stay tuned.

The Chamber is proud to operate the Visitors Bureau and is proud of the work of our Visitors Bureau Operating Committee and its accomplishments last year and throughout the years.

The Chamber continues to be engaged with Project Bald Eagle and its work throughout Lycoming County. The drug problem which plagues our region and the country must be met head-on and our Chamber is committed to being involved in this fight.

Each year is different and each Plan of Action changes during the course of the year, but with the support of our members, a professional staff and the leadership of the Board of Directors, your Chamber is ready to tackle its 132nd year of serving the business community and residents of Lycoming County.

Working to Make Our Community Stronger

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...Create a local pool of funds to be utilized for industry recruitment and retention in encouraging new investment here in Lycoming County.

New...In partnership with DCED, conduct a site selectors FAM tour in 2017 possibly around the Little League World Series.

New...Operate the inaugural program year of The Emerson Project – a mentorship program designed to foster leadership skills.

...Develop a multiphase economic development marketing campaign that incorporates business development missions, hosting site selection experts and appropriate online marketing.

...Plan and conduct an economic marketing workforce investment campaign aimed at raising necessary funds for a professional economic development effort.

...Continue to participate and monitor the Lycoming County Planning Department's process for updating the 10 year Comprehensive Plan.

...Seek opportunities to utilize the Economic and Community Growth Corporation in advancing both industrial development and community development projects here in Lycoming County.

...Continue to explore opportunities associated with the petrochemical and energy industry from shale gas.

...Continue to seek opportunities, where appropriate, for land and building acquisition by the IPC.

...Work at the regional and state level in participating with the PREP program in response to DCED regional economic development guidelines.

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

...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 Governor's Action Team, DCED and other 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:

New...Support PennDOT proposed US Route 220 Corridor Access Management Study recommendations between Jersey Shore and Williamsport for expedited implementation.

New...Coordinate with River Valley Transit, STEP and the County to address concerns about the PennDOT Regional Transit Consolidation Study recommendations.

New...Support legislative efforts to reduce funding for State Police non-transportation functions from the PA Motor License Fund to provide more funding for much needed transportation infrastructure improvements.

New...Strongly support the need for SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority to resolve current litigation with the rail operator RFP process and strongly encourage the Rail Authority to extend the contract deadline with the current operator to ensure appropriate investments in rail infrastructure and quality service provision for rail customers are maintained, especially with the likely resurgence in Marcellus rail activity.

...Support, where possible, the findings from the East End Gateway Traffic Study and work with the City, County, Lycoming College and other public and private entities as appropriate to support funding for those transportation improvements deemed by the committee to be beneficial for economic revitalization.

...Support and advocate the preservation of Act 89.

...Support the efforts to have the Federal Highway Administration designate US Route 15 as I-99 between Williamsport and New York State I-86.

...Provide a business community voice to the design and construction of the new airport terminal building.

...Monitor and determine role in legislative efforts being advanced to address the transportation funding mechanism at the state level.

...Participate in local and countywide discussions on local highway impact studies to monitor and speak to the impact upon local business and industry.

...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 to support business and leisure travel demand.

...Continue to support the CSVT project as a high regional priority as it progresses through design and construction phase of development.

...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.

...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:

New...Establish a program to partner with business and industry to have their employees relocating to Lycoming County to reside within the county.

New...Create a network of local business and industry officials to help tour new people with children relocating to Lycoming County through the area school districts.

New...Work with area employers and school districts to conduct a job fair in April that has a focus for graduating high school seniors that will be going directly into the local workforce.

...Conduct the annual Science Festival in partnership with Penn College and Lycoming College to highlight the opportunities for STEM in area industry and post-secondary institutions.

...Continue work to create internship portal for Lycoming County businesses to post internships available to county high school students and college students at Lycoming College and Pennsylvania College of Technology.

...Work to develop industry resource portal to enable county businesses to post information regarding employees available to serve as guest speakers, tours for students, and educators for Lycoming County schools.

...Conduct the highly successful business industry tours for the school counselors here in Lycoming County.

...Coordinate during the school calendar year the monthly business and industry tours for county superintendents providing dialogue between education professionals and business leaders in our community.

...Actively work toward the integration of business and education to meet current and future workforce development needs in Lycoming and Sullivan Counties.

...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.

...Continue to actively participate in the PA Core 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, positive successes, as well as current local education issues and events 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 achievement.

...Continue to advance and encourage adult college participation through the promotion and support of higher education awareness activities.

...Continue to support accessible higher education pipeline initiatives for working-age adults obtaining a degree and/or a skills credential that demonstrates competency to employers.

...Continue to 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

...Conduct “Welcome Receptions” for new school district superintendents when necessary.

D. LYCOMING COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

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

Action Items:

New...Work in developing an outdoor sports stadium complex in Lycoming County.

New...Develop programming around the USA Baseball U12 tryouts at the Little League complex.

New...Begin preparations for the 2018 Drum Corps Associates International competition.

...Conduct two group travel market blitzes and two FAM tours for group travel leaders and operators with one each in the Spring and Fall.

...Continue the Bases Loaded statue project to culminate with the 75th Anniversary of the Little League World Series.

...Coordinate production and distribution of annual Lycoming County Visitors Guide.

...Develop the annual marketing strategy for Lycoming County tourism.

...Conduct annual review of marketing materials.

...Oversee the annual Travel and Tourism Grant.

...Coordinate and supplement, where necessary, existing resources with other events.

...Work with the Liberty Arena management to attract sports opportunities to the market.

...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.

...Propose annual budget guidelines to the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

...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.

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

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...Consider unbudgeted, special requests for support on a case-by-case basis that would enhance the Jersey Shore business community utilizing not more than ten percent (10%) of the reserve funds of the organization.

New...Solicit new members for service on the committee.

...Position the Jersey Shore Area Chamber as the organization that can promote member events involving the business community, which are held throughout the greater Jersey Shore area.

...Continue to explore partnerships within the community and other opportunities to collaborate on the proposed Susquehanna River Fanny Float in 2017.

...Collaborate with the Jersey Shore Borough and Susquehanna Greenway Partnership to have an active part in the Jersey Shore River Town Revitalization Initiative.

...Continue the “lunch & learn” program for Jersey Shore Area Chamber of Commerce general meetings. These meetings are a series of workshops throughout the year that focus on topics such as social media, estate planning, etc. The “lunch & learn” programs are not in addition to the current meetings but will replace some of the general meetings.

...Continue with the Winter Mixer and Summer Picnic activities, soliciting more sponsorship opportunities with both events.

...Continue the Future Business Leaders of America scholarship program with the Jersey Shore Area School District with guidelines developed to maximize student participation.

...Continue with new member recruitment, with a goal of 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...Add to the programming one annual meeting that offers all members an opportunity to briefly share about their company.

New...Explore the possibility of conducting a PM Exchange in 2018.

...Continue to explore supporting a regular monthly event to bring the community and Montoursville businesses together, such as “Second Saturday” or “Third Friday”. (*Special Events Committee*)

...Continue to implement a rotating schedule to include each quarter—one General Business Meeting, one meeting with a guest speaker, and one tour of a Montoursville business. (*Programming / Membership Committee*)

...Develop a fundraising plan to support the goals and purpose of the Montoursville Chamber of Commerce. (*Fundraising Committee*)

...Conduct semi-annual social events to provide networking opportunities for Montoursville area businesses, and seek sponsorships to aid in funding these events. (*Special Events Committee*)

...Continue to consider special requests for support of Montoursville community events on a case-by-case basis. (*Programming / Membership Committee*)

...Continue efforts to increase community visibility within Montoursville that are in line with the Chamber’s stated purpose, to attract and retain Chamber members.

...Develop a plan to increase membership by five percent (5%).

...Educate our members and potential members about the benefits of our affiliation with the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce. (*Programming / Membership Committee*)

...Consider unbudgeted, special requests for support on a case-by-case basis that would enhance the Montoursville business community utilizing not more than ten percent (10%) of the reserve funds of the organization. (*Programming / Membership Committee*)

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:

...Operating Committee:

- Responsible for new sponsorships and retaining past sponsorships.
- Interview local businesses to see what they want out of Leadership Lycoming (Chair, Vice Chair and Chamber President/CEO).

...Project Committee:

- Create a plan to increase awareness of Leadership Lycoming projects with committee members, Chamber Board members, potential benefiting agencies/organizations and the community.

- Assign a committee member to each project to monitor progress. Maintain open and honest communication by actively working with both the class members and agencies.

...Selection Committee:

- Create a plan to recruit new applicants by contacting businesses that have never had an applicant or have not sent an applicant for several years.
- Determine scholarships for incoming class and make recommendations to the Operating Committee.

...Fundraising Committee:

- Increase net revenue for fundraising events by 20%.
- Plan and initiate a new fundraising event for the spring of 2017.
- Conduct an annual alumni direct mail campaign. Evaluate the potential of bringing back the Alumni Phone-a-thon as a follow-up to direct mail piece.

...Marketing Committee:

- Create and implement a plan to engage alumni with the intention to increase their participation in events and financial support. Include the Fundraising and Advisor Committees in the planning.
- Create a marketing plan to increase community awareness of the Leadership Lycoming program through different mediums. Share the success of past alumni serving the community, updates on the current class projects or leadership skills being taught through class days.

...Curriculum Committee:

- Work to implement specific leadership training into each monthly class.
- Further focus on pertinent leadership growth, while moving away from "tours" and other filler material.

...Advisor Committee:

- Offer four smaller advisor group sessions (October, November, January and March).
- Offer two larger events that bring together all class members, advisors and alumni with presentations or panel discussions from a few key executive level leaders in our community.
- Research and evaluate the benefit of providing training in 2018 to advisors.

...Finance Committee:

- Evaluate our investment policy to recommend changes to the Operating Committee, Chamber Finance Department and Chamber Board of Directors.

...Organizing Committee:

- Committee chairs will recruit and recommend co-chairs for succession plan.
- Continue to survey 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.

D. LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

Purpose: To serve as the "voice of business" in Lycoming County on issues affecting our business climate and quality of life.

Action Items:

New...Conduct a Morning Member Connection Breakfast designed around legislative issues.

...Work with our elected officials at all levels to maintain a strong alliance in making Lycoming County a better place to do business.

...With a primary emphasis on the State level of government, review proposed legislation and regulations to determine if a recommendation for support, opposition or neutrality should be made to the Chamber Board of Directors.

...Continue our alliance with other business organizations such as the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry in working together to promote pro job creation legislation.

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...Work to increase membership by encouraging referrals from current members and providing recognition in the Chamber Connection and on social media for those members that refer new members.

...Work to develop and conduct a viable, comprehensive, referral driven membership campaign.

...Utilize social media to promote Chamber events, ribbon cuttings, and announce new members.

...Continue to implement a program which encourages members to shop with fellow members through an announcement in the *Chamber Connection*. Each month a group of members will be featured, which is seasonally themed. (e.g. Jewelers and Florists in February, Lawn Care and Landscapers in May, etc.) The goal will be to include as many different members as possible over the course of the year.

...Work with Chamber staff in conducting the Morning Member Connections.

...Evaluate feedback from retention calls and report all information to the Chamber to take appropriate action(s) where necessary.

...The committee members will assist staff with leads for potential new members.

...Create a recognition sign listing new members at all Chamber events and place an indicator for new members on their name tags.

...The committee will distribute new member packets to all new members and follow up in the new members' second month with two Free PM Exchange Certificates. Registration forms for the upcoming PM Exchanges will be included. A six-month retention follow-up call will be made by committee volunteers or the staff using a provided script and form.

...Conduct semi-annual New Member Orientations.

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

...At PM Exchanges, the committee volunteers for the evening will present the PM Exchange host with a Certificate of Appreciation.

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

...When necessary, develop new and innovative ways to promote our Member Benefits.

...Review and confirm Member Benefits annually to ensure that they are meeting the membership's needs.

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 the Fall Foliage & Great Pumpkin Express Train Excursions.

...Coordinate the scheduling of PM Exchanges.

...Conduct the Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet.

...Sponsor the Annual Chamber Links Golf Outing.

...Conduct the Annual Grand Slam Kick-off Breakfast.

...Hold the 9th 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...Do a comprehensive demographic inventory of all of our Boards of Directors to make certain all aspects of our membership are represented.

New...Review staff structure and responsibilities.

...Maintain a balanced budget.

...Continue to institute new management control practices resulting in effective day-to-day operations.